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Vol 183
#18

THE NEW REPUBLIC

November 1, 1980

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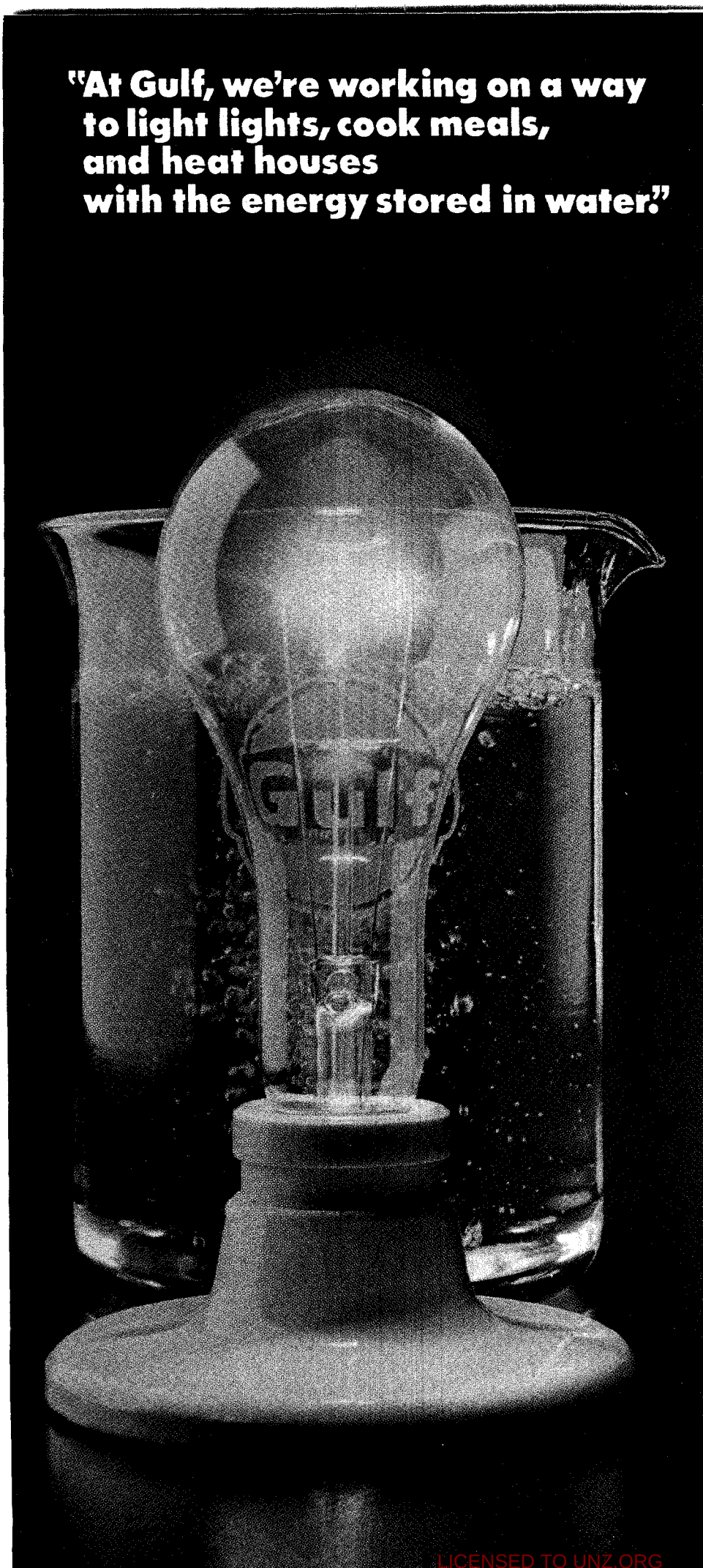

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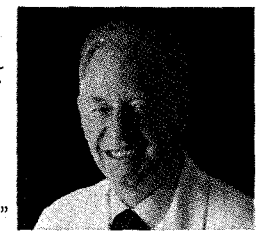

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TRB

from Washington
November 1, 1980

When It Was Good

Thirty-two years ago this week I was out covering Harry Truman in the final days of a presidential election. Unlike George Washington and Abraham Lincoln Harry Truman could play "Missouri Waltz" from memory. He played it one time at the National Press Club with Lauren Bacall perched leggily on top of the upright. Now we are having another election in 1980, but honestly, folks, things in those days were more fun. I know Carter and Reagan have lots of admirable points but (between you and me) Truman was livelier. Listen to me and I will tell you about that wonderful, carefree, incredible "non-political" whistle-stop trip across America in the 17-car special train toting the Truman family in the Ferdinand Magellan. I have yearned for that trip, I guess, every four years since then.

They don't make campaigns like that anymore, dammit. Candidates flit about in airplanes: here today and gone in half an hour. The beauty of 1948 was that there was no tension. You see, we all knew Dewey would win. Each new reporter swinging aboard our rolling circus would ask, in a low voice, "Does Truman know he's licked?" And we would answer confidentially, almost in a whisper, "We don't know; we can't tell." He was a spunky little cuss and nobody wanted to tell him it was hopeless.

We knew it by the press and the polls. I have *Editor & Publisher* of October 30, 1948, before me saying that "65% of American dailies, with 78% of the circulation," backed Dewey—the small, prim, neat little man with the wedding-cake smile. It was the fifth straight election in which the monolithic conservative American press backed the Republican. They weren't savage about it, the way they were to FDR; what was the use? That was the year Governor Dewey picked his Cabinet in advance. That was the year the *Saturday Evening Post* carried a piece by Joe and Stew Alsop, "What Kind of a President Will Dewey Make?" It was the year Winchell broadcast that the betting odds were 15 to one against Truman . . . the year Elmo Roper gave up taking polls in September because Dewey's lead made further sampling useless. It was the year when the *Chicago Tribune* in its bulldog edition carried the eight-column banner "Dewey Defeats Truman."

All told, Truman traveled 31,700 miles by train in 1948, somebody figured, made over 500 appearances, often 15 or 16 rear platform talks a day, and made reporters work harder than reporters ought to work. A candidate's special is about a third of a mile long and journalists, after three weeks, developed a lithe, lean look sprinting between their compartments and the awninged rear platform, writing a bulletin on yellow copy paper against the dusty side of the Magellan, yelling "Western! Western! Western!" and tossing it off to a messenger boy on the run, like somebody feeding fish to a gull.

Truman made one speech in his dressing gown at 1:30 in the morning, but in fairness I should say that this was the end of one day, not the beginning of a new one. It comes back as I write it down: the bounce of the train, the crowds on sidings with the same building moving across the nation always bouncing back the echo of what was said, the smell of the latrines, the ululating whistle, the cottonwood trees blowing, the first sight of snow-capped mountains 60 miles off in the sunset outside Cheyenne. And there was the farmer's wife at one stop running down the tracks hauling a child and screaming, "Say something! Say something!" as Truman appeared on the rear platform. I shall always regard this as the most unnecessary invitation offered in the long annals of American politics.

With another candidate we would have let him talk, knowing that the same anecdotes would come up again and again, like the lion on the merry-go-round: Dewey's dreary story about the man who thought he had beat the Spaniards at Manila Bay, for example. But with Truman there were all those gaffes, any one of them sure to defeat him. He thought he was dedicating an airport to a wartime ace at one spot, only to find it was a local woman killed in a crash. He told a jolly crowd at San Diego that "Your population is going to come to the saturation point unless you get some water to support it."

His comments about the "do-nothing, no-account 80th Congress" got more quotable as he proceeded. Crowds started small, but got bigger and finally immense at the end, as word got out that he was putting on a good show, and reporters had to pinch themselves to recall that Dewey would win. After a while we decided, back in our metal cubicles, that one gaffe might ruin a candidate but that a lot didn't hurt him at all. He was a poor speaker when he read his speech through thick glasses with chop-chop gestures; I remember a reporter in the front rank at Oklahoma City who finally supplied the necessary "No!" to a Truman rhetorical question after the audience had missed the cue, allowing him to get on with his work.

At Dexter, Idaho, after he got the formal speech out of the way, he came back to the microphone and chatted with the shirt-sleeved farm crowd in a cheerful exchange. He converted a bored audience into a sympathetic entity of 50,000 who seemed to become personal friends as he talked. He was a game little bantam, they said as they left. Or rather, he was a bouncy fox terrier, who would hurl himself fearlessly at a lion, or at General Douglas MacArthur, whichever got in his way.

Since he was going to lose anyway perhaps this didn't hurt him any. It was a "non-political trip," that first one. "I'm goin' down to Berkeley fur to git me a degree," he told crowds. Truman's incorrigible faculty for throwing away an already hopeless cause was indicated at Pocatello, Idaho, in his pert reply to a storm of Republican counterattack: "They can't prove nothin', they ain't got a thing on me!" For years afterward, to the tune of "Oh Susanna!" reporters pounded out the song that sprang from the trip. It was columnist Tom Stokes who saw the inevitable union of those two immortal lines. Verse followed ribald verse and then the chorus: "Oh, they can't prove nothin', they ain't got a thing on me/I'm goin' down to Berkeley, fur to git me a degree!"

Harry was a game little loser.

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Correspondence

Reagan's real spending

To the editors:

Stephen Chapman reports California state spending in real terms and taxes in per capita terms ("Ronald Reagan, Big Spender," *TNR*, October 18). The only meaningful figure is spending, since it does not hide deficits or federal aid, and spending should be adjusted for both inflation and population growth. Real per capita state spending rose 13 percent in California from 1967 to 1974, compared with an average of 29 percent for all states. For 1970 to 1974, real per capita spending rose by less than two percent in California, and by 15 percent in Georgia.

Alan Reynolds, Vice President
First National Bank of Chicago
Chicago, Illinois

Mortal sin

To the editors:

In your recent editorial I think you missed the main point about Cardinal Medeiros's recent pronouncements ("Politics and Pulpits," *TNR*, October 11). It is perfectly true, as you say, that liberals never objected to Catholic bishops speaking out in favor of civil rights. But no Catholic bishop or priest ever said or implied that to vote for a candidate who was opposed to civil rights was a mortal sin—and this is exactly what Cardinal Medeiros very strongly implied in the recent campaign. Indeed, it is not possible to interpret his words as meaning anything but this.

When the Catholic church begins to say to its members, "Vote as we tell you to or you risk burning in hell forever," it is a change, and a very serious and sinister one.

John Holt
Boston, Massachusetts

To the editors:

The New Republic editorial of October 11 castigates liberals for their attacks on Cardinal Medeiros. The editorial fails to perceive the threat to free expression posed by the Medeiros statement.

There is a profound difference between the statement "The Vietnam War is wrong, and I urge my parishoners to oppose it," and the statement "The Vietnam War is a sin—those who vote for candidates who support it face eternal damnation." The former lends itself to rebuttal by logical arguments expressing a contrary point of view; the latter may not be disputed by the faithful, for to do so invites hellfire and torment. The pronouncement of Cardinal Medeiros on abortion falls into the latter category.

Since the time of Galileo the characterization of the beliefs of one's opponents as religious heresy has constituted a threat to the free and rational interchange of ideas. It is for this reason that the statement of Medeiros must be condemned, regardless of one's views on abortion.

Eric J. Ratner
Stockton, California

Court volley

To the editors:

Michael Kinsley does lawyers and liberals a great injustice when he labels their opposition to the GOP platform's anti-abortion court-packing plank "stupid," "foolish," "demagogic," "dishonest," and "deceitful" ("Judge Not," *TNR*, October 18). Kinsley, himself a liberal, has chosen to shoot his own troops in the back as they guard the barricades because he feels that liberals must bravely accept the fate of a political tide that seems likely to keep turning to the right—that they must stand mute as the right wing, some right-to-lifers, and some in the Republican party conspire to use the Supreme Court and the Constitution for their own narrow ends. After all, Kinsley argues, those on the right are doing no more than the left has done throughout the last quarter-century of constitutional law.

Kinsley's biting criticism has the character of a self-inflicted wound, since he recognizes that the "court decisions of the last 25 years . . . that have transformed American life" were informed by "constitutional values" that, "by and large," are also "liberal values." Liberals need not be ashamed of the coincidence. Liberal values of tolerance and inclusion often find support in the Constitution precisely because it opens avenues of expression and choice. At its best, liberalism represents a frame of mind that is rooted in America's oldest constitutional traditions and most enduring constitutional norms. And in opposing the right-wing effort to warp our most basic charter either into a crowd-pleasing tool or into an instrument of moral imperialism, we are defending not a liberal cause, but the Constitution itself. Would it be "stupid" or "demagogic" to oppose a candidate who vowed to appoint only justices who swore an oath of implacable hostility to the Bill of Rights? Or to the equality of blacks? Or to the freedom of women? Is it truly "foolish" or demagogic" to resist the appointment of judges whose monomaniacal commitment to a fixed position on a single issue would lead them to skew their decisions in favor of one value to the exclusion of all others, regardless of the facts, and independent of the hard constitutional choices that must be made in specific cases?

In this there is a crucial difference between the selection of single-issue judges by single-issue champions and the appointment of judges with a "liberal" or "conservative" bent in their thought. Men and women with a commitment to uphold the Constitution often will be led to results they regard as demanded by the document regardless of their political pasts and preferences: the decision in *Roe v. Wade*, invalidating anti-abortion laws, was written by a Nixon appointee and supported by two others. Judges whose votes can be counted before they are cast—regardless of the context of the controversy or of the other constitutional values at stake in the case—may be well adapted to the politics of 1980, but their mark will be felt long into the next century, when the vital issues of the day are certain to be different.

We certainly are not opposed to the appointment of Republican judges. Nor do we necessarily oppose judges who disapprove of abortions or, for that matter, of *Roe v. Wade*. What we oppose is making the Constitution hostage to a single issue. Equally objectionable would be an attempt to ensure that all judicial appointees be sworn in advance to extend *Roe v. Wade* or to overrule the Court's abortion funding decision, *Harris v. McCrae*. Ours is a genuinely nonpartisan concern. Gerald Ford opposed the Republican platform plank on judges. Republican senator Charles Percy of Illinois called the GOP platform on judges "the worst plank I have ever seen in any platform in the Republican party." The purpose of Americans Concerned for the Judiciary is to generate public pressure against this frightful form of judicial selection; and if Kinsley

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is correct that "Reagan is already trying to weasel out of the platform commitment," then we can simply hope that he has seen the light.

Laurence H. Tribe
Cambridge, Massachusetts

Clarence Mitchell Jr.
Baltimore, Maryland
Americans Concerned for the Judiciary

Michael Kinsley replies:
My nasty adjectives were not aimed at opposition to the Republican anti-abortion plank, which I share. They were aimed at the hypocrisy of the campaign against that plank and Ronald Reagan. I do not feel liberals must surrender before the "political tide" to the right. But I do think that in a democracy liberals should try to reverse that political tide, rather than assert the right to stop it by judicial command. Reagan is not threatening to appoint judges with "implacable hostility" to the Constitution; he is threatening to appoint judges who interpret the Constitution differently than liberals would prefer. In general, Reagan and his friends want a *less* active role for the Supreme Court and the Constitution in settling political issues. So it is devious—and potentially self-defeating—to charge, as this letter does, that they "conspire to use the Surpeme Court and the Constitution for their own narrow ends."

Professor Tribe and Mr. Mitchell say that they would not object to Justices who might reverse the 1973 abortion decision, but their fundraising letter, which I quoted, is an appeal to fear of precisely this development. And the letter is brazenly dishonest about the present state of the law. It is possible to make a political issue out of Reagan's judges without the arrogant suggestion that his designs are illegitimate. For an example, see Anthony Lewis's column of October 9.

'Nullius in verba'

To the editors:
No matter how often reread, Stephen Toulmin's final paragraph (review of *Moore*, *TNR*, August 30) gives me the creepy feeling that he imagines the words *Nullius in verba* express criticism of sheer verbal facility and mean something like "Words don't mean much."

Horace would disagree, but Toulmin's version may indeed be more apt for times when men of letters are not necessarily literati and an airy quip—that English literary life has been for "a very long time" (note the historian's niceness) essentially frivolous—can stand, unsupported except by the authority of Wittgenstein and Lawrence, as a "disturbing" truth. A half-truth at best, and they're always disturbing.

Pity that Toulmin is evidently himself *addictus iurare in verba magistri.*

David Sullivan
Department of Classics
Stanford University
Stanford, California

Gobble, gobble

To the editors:
In his column, "Haruspications," in the October 11 issue of *TNR*, TRB has finally made sense of the current presidential election. Last night I sacrificed a turkey to see if I could foresee who would be the winner on November 4. The answer I got when I examined the entrails was gobble, gobble, gobble.

Kenneth J. Massey
Hudson, New Hampshire

Dirty pool

To the editors:
John Lukacs's ad hominem attack on William Appleman Williams in his review of *Empire as a Way of Life* (*TNR*, October 11) is dirty pool indeed. Like many scholars who believe total objectivity to be impossible, Williams takes pains to put his background and predilections fairly before the reader. This may be vulgarity to Lukacs, but I perceive it as honesty and a refreshing contrast to historians of foreign policy who conceal the fact that their careers depend on the advocacy of certain views.

Williams is a valuable scholar who has written sanely and sensibly about American foreign policy for many years. His analysis of past and present accords with the experience of most people and makes the world intelligible in an way that the slogans of cold war apologists do not. Lukacs has picked a few real nits, but most of the passages he quotes are factually accurate and all of them are defensible interpretations of the events they describe.

His appalling diatribe shows that Lukacs is a prejudiced, closed-minded scholar and no gentleman at all.

J. Quinn Brisben
Chicago, Illinois

A bas les provincials!

To the editors:
The New Republic denounces "the French" for the anti-Semitic outrage of the rue Copernic ("French Terror," *TNR*, October 18). The choice of term is singularly unfortunate. It is language which would be thought vulgarly xenophobic in a country club locker room and which is especially deplorable in a journal of educated opinion. However, the editorial evoked my memories of childhood far from the 16th Arrondisement of Paris—in the Bronx. The day after the November 1938 anti-Semitic outbreaks in Nazi Germany (*Kristallnacht*) I walked to the public library. The way led from Jewish through Christian blocks: America, then as now, was a religiously plural society. I was taunted, as I went, by Christian children whose jeers and obscenities referred triumphantly to the events of the day before. It is not "the French" who have been "reluctant to learn, reluctant to remember," but *TNR*. Anti-Semitism remains an integral part of Western culture. Are we to believe that the frightened and hateful provincials of our own Moral Majority are convinced philo-Semites? Of course there is an anti-Semitic tradition in France; why should France be different from other nations? It is by no means the exclusive possession of the "upper class"—whatever that may be. Those who have responded to the bomb in the rue Copernic with anger and horror are no less French than the anti-Semites. *The New Republic*, not for the first time, has found a convenient occasion to vent its own ignoble Francophobia.

No doubt there is some connection between the renewed outbreak of anti-Semitism in Europe and Israel's struggle against the Arabs. The connection may be a good deal more complicated than *The New Republic* claims. Suppose that the Israeli government's policies toward the Arabs in the West Bank have two consequences: one is to legitimate the terrible cycle of violence and counter-violence we have experienced; the other is to withdraw from Israel the moral legitimacy of those Enlightenment ideas to which *The New Republic* recurs in moments of crisis. In any event, *The New Republic*'s peculiar synthesis of pharisaism and philistinism is repugnant.

Norman Birnbaum
Georgetown University Law Center
Washington, DC

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

A Journal of Politics and the Arts, Vol. 183, No. 18, Issue 3434, November 1, 1980. Published weekly (except the issues of January 5, July 12, August 9, September 13) and distributed by The New Republic, Inc., 1220 19th Street NW, Washington, DC 20036. Phone (202) 331-7494. Single copy, $1.25; yearly subscriptions, $28; foreign, $31; students, $17.

Indexed in Readers' Guide and Media Review Digest. The New Republic is available on microfilm from University Microfilms International, 300 N. Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48106.

Send all remittances, inquiries about subscriptions, and undelivered copies, and changes of address to Subscription Service Department, The New Republic, P.O.Box 955, Farmingdale, N.Y. 11737.

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Cover: Ronald Reagan and Diana Lynn in Bedtime for Bonzo *(1951). Photo courtesy of Movie Star News. Article on page 21.*

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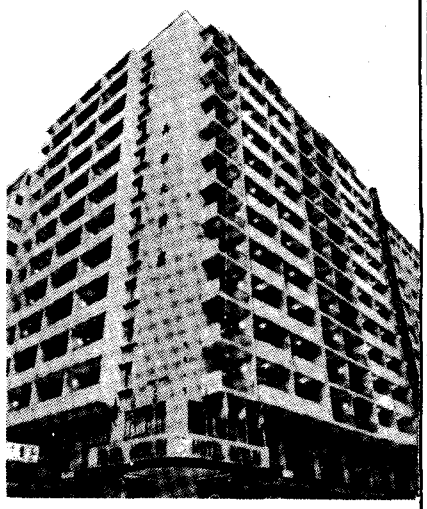

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The New Republic is phototypeset and produced by 19th Street Graphix, Washington, DC.
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THE NEW REPUBLIC

November 1, 1980

Hostages

It was classic Jimmy Carter. A Chicago television interviewer asked him last week, wasn't he using the American hostages in Iran for political gain just as he was accusing Ronald Reagan of doing? Carter answered unctuously that if the hostages could be freed before November 4, he would support this even if it would cost him the election. How noble! And no doubt he would reduce inflation and unemployment, bring peace to the world, and so on, with no thought of the political consequences. The fact is, though, he has done none of these pleasant things. All these matters are in a worse state than when he took office, and it is the political consequences of *that* he wishes to avoid.

Why on earth shouldn't the hostages be a political issue? They represent the most sustained international humiliation this nation has ever undergone, a humiliation made much worse by Carter's original huffing and puffing and probably lengthened by his later attempt to put the whole issue aside. Just as Carter wants, and deserves, credit for the peace between Egypt and Israel, he must take responsibility for the dangerous chaos that has erupted in the Persian Gulf during his term. This is the principle of political accountability, much easier to enforce in a parliamentary system (where Carter would have been out long ago), but essential to the functioning of any democracy.

Perhaps by the time you read this, the 52 American government employees who have been imprisoned for almost a year will be free. We hope so. (And we expect that, for consistency, President Carter will warn voters against giving him any credit for the achievement, just as he warns against making an issue of his previous failure.) But millions of disgruntled voters are still being held hostage by Jimmy Carter over concern about Ronald Reagan. Many, like Ronald Steel (see page 16), will vote for Carter as a man of "cautious incompetence" or, like Morton Kondracke (see page 9), will support him as an "experienced muddler."

But if Carter wins, and the protest vote is small, Carter and his coterie will not take it as a message of reluctance and distaste. They will not know that you "held your nose" while pulling the lever. They will take it as a validation of their record, and that's what it will be. Hamilton Jordan, Patrick Caddell, and Gerald Rafshoon—the real shapers of this administration—will be crowing with triumph, and politicians across the country will be modeling their ambitions on Carter's achievement. All your disapproval of what has gone on the past four years might as well not exist. As a message to the people in power, your vote will be indistinguishable from Miss Lillian's. If you agree with us about Carter's record, this is truly throwing your vote away.

Carter apologists have been playing cleverly on liberal guilt by arguing that a protest vote is a luxury that only comfortably off liberals can afford. They say that those "on the firing line" will pay the price for such a profligate exercise in political expression, if it helps elect Ronald Reagan. We make no claims for Reagan's compassion or progressive sensibility. But to be utterly pragmatic, as the Carterites wish us to be, would the worst off in our society really be worse off under Reagan than under Carter? Clearly there will be no dramatic new redistribution efforts under either gentleman. The best those on the bottom rung can hope for, then, is an expanding economy that will create jobs for the unemployed, and a more stable currency that will slow the erosion of fixed incomes. Can anyone believe, given Carter's disastrous economic record, that he is clearly more likely than Reagan to achieve these things? An uneducated, unemployed ghetto teenager; an elderly widow on a fixed pension; a welfare mother whose real benefits have melted with inflation and who knows that the state legislature won't increase them—all these people might well vote for Reagan out of strict economic self-interest.

We do not urge a vote for Reagan, for obvious reasons. But we will not be stampeded into sending a message of approval to Jimmy Carter. Under the circumstances, a protest vote—for John Anderson, even though he evidently cannot win—is a perfectly legitimate and praiseworthy action. Outspent by a ratio of more than 15 to one by each of the two party candi-

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dates, forced by journalists to talk about his viability rather than his ideas, Anderson has been dignified, sensible, and respectful of the voters. That is the Anderson difference. If you feel this way, don't let anybody shame you out of it.

White House Watch

Debate or Die

One of the few good things, maybe the only good thing, that emerged from the campaign hassling between Ronald Reagan and Jimmy Carter in mid-October was agreement on a televised encounter that might turn out to be a genuine presidential debate. The enormous importance that came to be attached to whether there should be something called a debate, and the maneuverings that preceded the final agreement, seemed to me to justify a previously expressed view that the business constitutes a distortion of the political process and the country would be better off without it. But all that is by the way now. The meeting that Carter wanted, with Reagan and without John Anderson, was set with rules more reasonable than any that had been previously proposed. So far as effect upon the election outcome goes, more than a year of primary and general election campaigning was jettisoned. It looked as if such encounters—"debates" if you insist—would become institutionalized parts of the quadrennial presidential selection process. Who knows? They might in the future shorten the tedious and dulling campaign season that has become an affliction. If good debaters are what the electorate wants in the presidency, why not skip all but the preliminary nominations and settle for one or two or four televised exercises and be done with it?

The maneuvers and dealings that took Carter and Reagan to their engagement in Cleveland can be appreciated only with some recall of the past. Back in May and June, there was Carter saying he had no interest in debating minor candidates and "two Republicans," meaning Reagan and the lifelong Republican turned independent candidate, John Anderson. Then Carter was saying he might debate candidates other than Reagan if they had a theoretical chance of election, provided that he also had a go at Reagan alone. That became a firm condition, first Reagan alone and then maybe Anderson or others, in August. Beginning last May, Carter leveled about why he played down Anderson and played up Reagan: "Whatever strength Anderson has in November," Carter said, "will be more at my expense than at Reagan's expense." Carter's campaign manager, Robert Strauss, and the associate managing the debate discussions for Reagan, James Baker, said with equal and refreshing candor that each of them was bargaining for his man's advantage. They and their principals tended later to be less open about that and more inclined to stress the educational value of a debate on their particular terms, but the truth was never hidden.

The nonpartisan League of Women Voters and its president, Ruth Hinerfeld, were at the center of the prolonged arguments and variations, and at different times made themselves thoroughly disliked by the Carter people, the Andersons, and the Reagans. The Carters resented what they took to be the League's attitude that because it had sponsored the 1976 debates between Carter and Gerald Ford it was the ordained sponsor of the 1980 debates. Anderson gloried in the League's finding in September that a 15 percent or better standing in national polls qualified him for debates with Reagan and Carter. Anderson complained in October that the League "knuckled under to the White House" when he was eliminated because his standings in five of six polls fell below 15 percent. The League a bit earlier had offended Reagan by inviting him and Carter to debate each other before they also debated Anderson. Reagan, having debated Anderson without Carter, was leading substantially in the polls just then and didn't want to risk any more debates. He righteously refused to join in excluding Anderson and then, after the League scuttled Anderson, used the exclusion as an excuse to duck debate with Carter.

The only intelligent and potentially useful discussions that occurred during the early phases happened secretly, among the 14 members of the League's public advisory committee and its 22 trustees. The advisers, some of whom had served in 1976, included former FCC chairman Newton Minow and former HUD secretary Carla Hills, the committee's co-chairs. Hinerfeld convened the committee once, on July 8, and consulted members individually after that. She told them in July that they were to be advisers only, were not expected to vote on questions before them, and would have no part in League decisions as to timing, format, and qualifications for the debates. All that, she said, would be for decision by the trustees.

The advisory meeting and a three-day trustee meeting in August were confidential and very little of what happened at them has been disclosed. It's known, however, that at both meetings there were serious arguments over the criteria for debaters other than the Republican and Democratic party candidates. Anderson by July was a viable prospect. Minow argued strongly that Anderson should be invited to participate and that the invitation should be announced and justified as a League judgment, without apology and without reliance on such fixed criteria as poll standings. Pro-Anderson members were for low poll requirements, pro-Reagan and pro-Carter members for high poll standings. Carla Hills's emphasis was upon the League's need for long-term procedures that would serve it as well in 1984 and 1988 as in 1980 and thereby

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help to institutionalize election-year debates. She was for stated criteria but not the sort of fixed and rigid criteria, chiefly the 15 percent poll standing, that Hinerfeld and the other trustees adopted after much argument.

A fair question is how much, if any, pressure was brought upon Hinerfeld and other League figures to dump Anderson and later to drop the whole thing, as Reagan wished for a while, or to push for a head-to-head debate, as Carter wanted. The short answer is that plenty of pressure was brought, but not in the way one might expect. Most of it was through the media. Carter, Reagan, and Anderson advocates were in frequent touch with Hinerfeld and Lee Hannah, the League's temporary communications expert, but by all accounts there was no direct lobbying in the usual sense. The Reagan message to the League until around October 16 was, don't call us, we'll call you. The Carter message was, we've got several possible sponsors lined up and if you want to stay in the picture, get going toward a Carter-Reagan debate. The Anderson message, until there was no further point in an Anderson message, was—be fair, be just, keep him in. Some of the advisers and trustees had argued, more in principle than in favor of Anderson, that League officials should be mindful that a decision to include or exclude a third candidate was a political decision that could have a critical effect.

Around October 16 a marked change occurred, mostly among the Reaganites. Reporters with the traveling Reagan press party were told that "the governor" might want to debate Carter after all, Anderson or no Anderson. The reporters deduced that a narrowing of Reagan's lead over Carter in the polls, and the evident impact that Carter's "war and peace" gambit was having, accounted for the shift. Strauss turned up the heat on Reagan and the League with a statement that Carter welcomed a debate with Reagan "at any reasonable time, at any reasonable date, at any reasonable place, under any reasonable format. . . ." Reagan announced the same day, the 17th, that he looked forward to "a face-to-face situation where my views and Mr. Carter's will stand for all to see and judge." In a last dig at Carter for denigrating Anderson by excluding and ignoring him, Reagan also said: "Measured by his present support and resources, Congressman John Anderson should be included in that debate. Mr. Carter should do what's right and fair. I will leave it to his conscience and the judgment of the American people whether Mr. Carter should meet Mr. Anderson." Reagan associates planted stories that Reagan had wanted to debate Carter all along and that it wasn't, as reported, a matter of advisers persuading him against his will that he had to do it in order to halt the erosion of his lead in the polls. As Reagan and Carter had known in advance it would, the League formally invited them to debate in Cleveland on October 28.

A long meeting Saturday the 18th between a Carter team led by Strauss, a Reagan team led by Baker, and Hinerfeld and Hannah at the League's Washington office produced an impression that a debate format had been agreed upon and that the only remaining difference concerned the place and date. The Reagans wanted the night before the election in Washington; the Carters preferred Sunday the 26th in Cleveland. Jim Baker told an associate that he expected to settle the place and date in a telephone conversation with Strauss that Saturday night. Strauss didn't call, Baker postponed a weekend trip to Houston where his mother is ill, and a longer meeting Monday the 20th still didn't produce agreement.

The last disagreement, one that could have killed any debate, proved to be over format rather than place and date. Jim Baker had said in August and September that Reagan preferred direct debate between the candidates, with only a moderator and without the panels of questioning journalists that had dominated previous debates. Reagan in his October 17 statement recommended the 1976 format with four questioners. Strauss and the other Carterites demanded maximum, direct exchange between the candidates. That continued to be Baker's preference, too, but he didn't press or defend it. Each team was so leery of the other that neither welcomed anything the other proposed. After an all-day discussion on the 21st, Baker and Strauss and the others agreed on a format that retains the role of questioning panelists and increases the time for direct exchanges and rebuttals. The Carters accepted the 28th and the Reagans accepted Cleveland.

All hands tacitly agreed not to talk about what each side had wanted, won, and given up. The common message was that everybody was happy. In truth, a depressing metamorphosis had come over both factions. It no longer was a matter of one wanting a debate, the other ducking a debate. Both Carter and Reagan, frighteningly close in the polls, were afraid not to debate.

John Osborne

Politics

A Vote for Jerry Ford

The worst political judgment I ever made wasn't that George Bush would win in New Hampshire, that Walter Cronkite might run with John Anderson, or that Anderson could win the election, bad as all those were. The worst was in 1976 when I, along with millions of other people now equally chagrined, voted for Jimmy Carter instead of Gerald Ford. Confessing this error and trying to recall the logic behind it is no idle exercise to cleanse the soul. It bears on the agonizing process of deciding whom to vote for this year. The question is: knowing we did wrong in 1976, do we want to tell our

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grandchildren that we voted for Jimmy Carter twice?

Many people who voted for Carter in 1976 can say that they were taken in on the morals issue—that the choice was between a decent, honorable, love-you-never-lie-to-you Sunday school teacher and a second-rate pol who had pardoned Richard Nixon. I have no such excuse. First, I thought the pardon was an act of political courage necessary to avoid months or years of national preoccupation with past crimes, when guilt was fully established. Second, I was under no illusions about Jimmy Carter's goodness. His meanness and his willingness to shade the truth were apparent to reporters covering him. Before delivering a low blow at Ford, Carter would say, "Now, I don't mean to be critical, but. . . ." The similarity to Nixon was unmistakable.

RATHER THAN morality, I was taken in on the competence issue. Jimmy Carter was inexperienced at national government, but I (and others, I know) decided that electing him was a risk worth taking. "Whatever he does," we said, "it's got to be better than this." "This" referred to Ford's apparent lack of direction, his inarticulateness, his WIN buttons, his allowing the economy to slide into the deepest recession since the 1930s, the unending veto battles with Congress, the intra-administration wars (Rumsfeld vs. Simon, Schlesinger vs. Kissinger), the purge of Nelson Rockefeller, the nomination of Bob Dole. Ford's seemed a messy administration and Carter promised a clean slate, zero-based budgeting, an engineering approach, tax reform, job creation, restored comity between the Executive Branch and Congress.

Well, now we know how wrong we were. There has been no direction to this administration, either. Carter started out stimulating the economy, then abruptly learned that Jerry Ford was right after all—that inflation is "Public Enemy Number One"—and embarked on five separate anti-inflation programs, the last of which produced a recession Carter could call his own. Carter's energy policy wandered too, but finally came back to decontrol, which is what Ford wanted all along. In defense policy, Carter started out wanting cuts, but ended up advocating big increases just like Ford, and even adapted Ford's slogan, "peace through strength." Carter wanted to ban nuclear weapons from the face of the earth and proposed a whole new arms control formula to the Soviets. After three years, of course, he ended up negotiating a SALT II treaty not very different from the one that Ford and Henry Kissinger had achieved in 1976. But by that time he couldn't get it passed. From woolly idealism about Soviet intentions (no "inordinate fear of communism" here), Carter finally arrived at a position that echoed warnings issued by the outgoing Ford administration. Last week in a radio broadcast Carter said that "we face a potential adversary, the Soviet Union, whose government has funneled much of the wealth and talents of its own people into the construction of a military machine. . . . We see a large buildup of Soviet military forces; we see the arming and use of client states such as Cuba, and we see the brutal Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. . . ."

Not only are Carter's positions a lot like Ford's; his mistakes are, too. Carter's Moral Equivalent of War was a rerun of Ford's WIN, an attempt to solve real problems with rhetoric. Carter's sacking half his Cabinet in 1979 was a rerun of Ford's Halloween massacre in 1975, with one victim, James Schlesinger, having his head lopped in both. To match Ford's macho exercise over the *Mayaguez*, in which more US servicemen were killed than sailors rescued, we've had Carter's "incomplete success" in the Iranian desert.

For four long years we have watched Jimmy Carter discover reality, reinvent the wheel, and often botch the job as he went along. Where he's ended up is just about where Jerry Ford would have started out. Do we want to make the same mistake again?

Of course we don't, but the difficult question in this election is, what was the key mistake? If it was electing Jimmy Carter, if he's to blame for all our troubles of the last four years, then we should take another risk on an inexperienced challenger, Ronald Reagan, in the belief that anybody could do better. But if our problems are endemic, if muddling through is really the best the United States can do in an age of murky and ambiguous challenges, then perhaps we had best stick with an experienced muddler, Jimmy Carter, who after four years of fumbling has finally learned at least where the light switches are.

In economics, for example, there is just the faintest hint that Carter has finally discovered what really ails America: declining productivity. You could say that he should have understood it long ago, and you would be right. You can doubt whether he really understands its centrality and whether he has concocted his revitalization program as an election-year gimmick. You can wonder whether interest groups, principally declining industries like steel and autos (and their unions), won't get hold of the program and re-create British Steel and British Leyland in America. But by comparison Ronald Reagan is offering magic as the solution to the economic crisis. Cut taxes, he says, and everything will be all right. If reason is any guide in political affairs, one has to conclude that Reagan's plan won't work. To slash taxes, increase defense spending, and eliminate no existing social program will not reduce inflation, spur productivity, or improve the competitiveness of American products. It will only fuel inflation and encourage consumption and speculation. The prospect is that Ronald Reagan will try out his economic formula, but soon will have to abandon it for something else, probably a tight money policy and another planned recession to soak down flaming inflation.

How many times do we have to negotiate SALT II? Kissinger did it, Carter scrapped it. Carter did it, and now Reagan wants to scrap it again, believing that we can get a better deal. Why should the Soviet Union agree in 1981 to a treaty proposal it rejected in 1977? Reagan says, because we will threaten an arms race,

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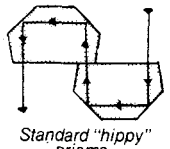

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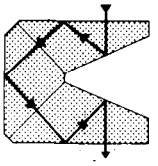

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and that will be the incentive. But the fact is that we have resumed the arms race. Carter wants to build the MX missile which will threaten the Soviet land-based missile system when it is finished in the late 1980s. Reagan can't build it any faster than Carter would; in fact, Reagan still isn't sure how he wants to base it. SALT II is not a perfect treaty, but it would restrain the Soviets from building a number of new weapons which they are capable of building, while preventing us from building nothing that we are able to build. And most important, it sets standards by which we can judge what the Soviets are doing. With the treaty unratified, we're already seeing scare stories about hidden Soviet missiles and secret weapons tests. If the treaty is scrapped, if the Soviets are not barred from concealing what they're testing, leaks from the Air Force and various think tanks are very likely to produce a panic before President Reagan decides that something's really got to be done to get the arms race under control.

JIMMY CARTER has been rightly criticized for lacking overall strategy in world affairs, for reacting to events and to the contrary advice of his appointees, for failing to contain the forces of disorder in the world. There is no question that his conduct of foreign affairs has been mistake-prone (the neutron bomb fiasco and various UN debacles are only the most notorious examples). It's no doubt true that a gifted statesman—a de Gaulle, a Roosevelt, a Kissinger—would have avoided many of his errors. Conceivably, such an ideal leader could marshal US assets—our economic, military, and political power—in such a way as to outflank the Soviet Union, build US influence, and suppress disorder. But even he would have to cope with enormous complexities, now all too familiar to us all: the loss of the nuclear monopoly, the rise of economic competitors, the decline of respect for authority both at home and overseas. Ronald Reagan, it ought to be clear, is no such ideal leader. He has never written on the subject of grand strategy and he gives little evidence of having read much on the subject, either. His agenda is to build up US military power to the point that no one would dare breach the peace. But where is he going to employ that power? What is his conception of America's vital national interests? On one hand, he has given the impression that he would use military power cavalierly—in Rhodesia, in Cuba, in Lebanon, Cyprus, Korea. On the other hand, Reagan and his advisers seem to be so convinced of America's weakness that they might be paralyzed in circumstances where force really was required. I think the war-peace issue in this election is a dangerous wash. Either Carter or Reagan might get us into a war during the next four years, and either might do so out of braggadocio *or* weakness.

It's argued in Reagan's favor that even though he is inexperienced in foreign policy, his advisers would be stronger than Carter's and less divided philosophically. Reagan promises to restructure the government to do away with rivalries between the State Department and the National Security Council. But if Reagan goes through with the Cabinet selections tentatively drawn up by his top advisers, there will continue to be conflicts. Former treasury secretary George Schultz may be strong on international economics, but he is not notably experienced in foreign policy. Richard V. Allen, the presumptive national security adviser, does have strong views on foreign policy and will assemble a glittering staff of smart young hawks. Conflicts are inevitable. And there will be more of them if Henry Kissinger manages to find his way into a position of influence with Reagan. At the end of the day, what's more, it is the president who needs to decide which of his advisers is right, and with Reagan we would have a president who has not spent his time out of power thinking, reading, and writing deeply about foreign affairs or traveling widely, but who has been churning out two-minute radio spots and 600-word newspaper columns—largely, one suspects, on the basis of accumulated clippings from *Human Events*.

I do not see any evidence from his 1980 campaign, either, that Ronald Reagan is a great strategist or political leader. He had everything going for him on issues and on public dissatisfaction with Carter to be assured of election, but out of caution, out of inability to organize an effective staff, out of an inability to maneuver, he has lost his big lead and has allowed Carter to make him the main issue in his campaign. Political brilliance does not guarantee effective governance, God knows, as witness the example of Jimmy Carter. But what kind of governance can we expect when a candidate isn't a good politician?

To avoid the dismal alternatives of Reagan and Carter, I would gladly choose John Anderson if he had a chance of being elected. On paper—that is, on the basis of position papers—Anderson is the best of the three candidates. He understood long before Carter the imperative of improving American productivity and proposed a lengthy series of measures to achieve that end, measures which the next president would be wise to adopt. He also understood ahead of everyone the necessity of doing something decisive to reduce US dependency on foreign oil. But partly for historic reasons and partly from his own inability to extend his appeal, he seems destined not to capture much more than 10 percent of the vote. I can't tell my grandchildren that when the great decision of 1980 had to be made I ducked behind a protest vote.

So what am I going to do? Barring some truly astounding event, I am not going to base my decision on the October 28 debate. Debates are a very poor measure of presidential effectiveness or of future presidential policy. Gerald Ford never really thought that Poland was a free country, yet he suffered from having blurted out an unfortunate statement implying that it was. Jimmy Carter should have suffered far more for his statement that the US should not defend

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the independence of Yugoslavia, but that didn't represent the policy of his administration, either. Nor would I decide on the basis of some October surprise such as the release of US hostages from Iran. In fact, I would be inclined to be cynical about such an election-eve event—cynical about Iran's motives and about the administration's last-minute maneuvers to achieve it.

In the end, I think you have to expect that a president's administration will reflect his character and that his character can be divined best from the public persona he has created for himself. I do not expect a lot from a second Carter term, based on the record of the first. Presumably there will be more indecision, more splitting of differences, no sudden ability to see things whole. There may well be a tendency to punish perceived enemies. Ronald Reagan has created the persona of a genuinely decent man, but one who is not very deep or curious, a passive man who allows his subordinates to have their way. If it were clear that Reagan had thought out what he wanted for America, had contemplated the difficulties he would face, and had developed a strategy for overcoming them, I might be tempted to take the risk of turning out another incumbent in the hopes of getting somebody better. But I suspect that Reagan would be like Carter was after 1976—an innocent requiring time to be disabused of his illusions, a fumbler, an experimenter. I think, this time, that the way to correct the mistakes of 1976 is to keep the Jerry Ford we have in office instead of leaping at the merest suggestion of something better. It means voting for Jimmy Carter twice. I hope my grandchildren will understand.

Morton Kondracke

One sleeping dog that won't lie still.

Positions, Please?

Social Security is the nation's biggest domestic program, accounting for more than a fifth of the entire federal budget and exceeded only by defense in total cost. It pays out money each month to some 35 million Americans, or one out of every six. The Social Security system is also in serious financial trouble, a problem of profound importance to the entire nation. But it is a problem which cannot be discussed in a presidential campaign. The only time Social Security comes up this year is when one of the candidates tries to depict the other as eager to throw old widows out in the snow. President Carter has dredged up an old proposal of Ronald Reagan's to make participation in Social Security voluntary, a position Reagan has long since abandoned. Reagan in turn has accused the president of wishing to tax Social Security benefits, a proposal which actually came from a government advisory council independent of the White House and which Carter hasn't seconded. What both candidates prefer is to ignore the system's deep-rooted ailments and the unpleasant options for remedying them.

It may be possible to ignore these during this presidential campaign, but it will be impossible to do so for the next four years, regardless of who wins November 4. Social Security is not one of those issues where action is merely highly desirable. Here it is absolutely necessary. Without changes of some sort, the system will go bankrupt in a few years. Millions of retirees and other beneficiaries who paid into the system during their working lives will not get the benefits they were promised. Congress and the White House have been trying to avert this calamity for years. In 1977, at Carter's prodding, Congress decided to raise the payroll tax by nearly a third by 1990, and to increase the wage base from $16,500 to $42,600—the biggest single tax increase in Social Security's history. Against all predictions, Congress then refused to roll back the increases the following year. This year it reshuffled the money in the system's three trust funds (Old Age and Survivors' Insurance, Disability, and Hospital Insurance) to keep the OASI fund afloat for two more years, by which time a new measure will be required. As things now stand, the old age and disability funds will be in the red six billion dollars by the end of 1983 and $22 billion by the end of 1985.

The deeper problem is that the nation's population is growing and the number of workers paying into the system is shrinking in relative terms. In the last 30 years, the percentage of the US population aged 65 or over has risen by more than half, and it will do so again in the next half-century. Right now there are 3.3 workers paying into the system for each person drawing benefits out of it. By the year 2030 there will be only two workers for each beneficiary, thus requiring each worker to carry a larger burden. (By now the myth of Social Security as an insurance program has been pretty thoroughly demolished. It is purely a transfer program, taking money from current workers and giving it to retirees and other beneficiaries.) The only way to keep benefits at their current levels is to raise taxes. The only way to avoid raising taxes is to reduce benefits. These are facts of life, which nothing short of an act of God can change.

But if Carter and Reagan cannot change these facts, they can ignore them for now. The president's position on Social Security is clear. It is that taxes cannot be raised or cut, and benefits cannot be raised or cut. To talk about cutting taxes or raising benefits is irresponsible, since the system is nearly bankrupt already. On the other hand, to talk about raising taxes or cutting benefits is at worst cruel and at best politically dangerous. When Reagan proposed to allow retirees to continue working and still receive Social Security payments (now they can earn no more than $5,000 a year

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without being penalized), Carter promptly attacked the idea as another drain on the system's funds. Reagan's position is less clear, but he too apparently rejects the only two options available, namely to reduce benefits or raise taxes. He also opposes taxation of benefits, another issue on which demagoguery comes easy. Any mention of taxing benefits is guaranteed to alarm retired people, but the truth is the genuinely poor wouldn't have to pay taxes anyway. Only those beneficiaries with other sources of income (such as unearned income from investments, which is allowed without any reduction in benefits) would be taxed to any significant degree.

The only interesting idea to emerge in this campaign has come from John Anderson. He would levy a 50-cent per gallon tax on gasoline, the proceeds going to Social Security. This, he says, would permit a 50 percent cut in the payroll tax, besides promoting energy conservation. Workers who drive less than the average would actually be better off than now. The merits of this specific approach aside, Anderson at least makes no effort to conceal the need to raise taxes in some way to keep Social Security solvent.

In the long run, there is no alternative to either raising taxes or reducing benefits. A failure to do one will lead inevitably to the other. The Carter administration proposed in 1977 that the whole problem be disposed of by using money from general revenues to finance benefits, and still apparently prefers this to any other solution. This may be a good idea, but unless it is accompanied by spending cuts elsewhere in the federal budget, it will require a tax increase. Politically, of course, it may be easier to pretend that no rise in the payroll tax means no rise in Social Security taxes. This change also would undermine the formal connection between paying into the system and getting benefits out of it. There is nothing wrong with this except that it might also erode public support—and thus public willingness to pay—for Social Security by making it into a more straightforward welfare program.

There are other measures that could be taken. The most obvious, which would be a good idea even if Social Security weren't in trouble, is to include federal, state, and local employees in the system. They naturally will resist, since their own pension programs are considerably more generous, but if Social Security is good enough for us, it's good enough for them. This universal coverage wouldn't solve the long-term problem, but it would help out in the immediate future. Making benefits taxable, on the other hand, wouldn't help Social Security directly, but it still makes sense. There never has been any sound rationale for not counting Social Security benefits as income (pension benefits are taxable), and in fact Congress never has passed a bill to exclude them. The practice grew out of an IRS ruling which Congress never has been willing to reverse.

But whatever is to be done about Social Security, it will have to be done soon. The man who takes the oath of office next January 20 will have few tasks more imposing, or more crucial to the nation, than confronting Social Security's problems. We all would be better off knowing how Jimmy Carter and Ronald Reagan plan to do it.

Stephen Chapman

Coming:

Morton Kondracke on the Great Debate.

End of an idyll.

Babbling Books

If there is one use of tax dollars that few taxpayers could resent, it is the services offered by the National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, a division of the Library of Congress. By 1937—14 years before commercial long-playing records—engineers hired by the American Foundation for the blind had developed a long-playing "Talking Book" and a cheap machine on which to play it. Today featherweight flexidiscs carry close to 88 minutes per side.

All this costs the individual listener nothing. People certified by their doctors as eligible for these records receive a record player free, all recordings free, and parcel post both ways free, from the nearest regional library.

The authors and publishers of books and magazines receive no payment for this use of their copyright material. Most authors aren't even aware of a clause in the standard publishing contract that grants this permission as a public service. They blush with pleasure when informed that one of their books is to be recorded for the blind. I suspect that other recorded authors like Dickens and Dostoevsky, Henry James and Marcel Proust, Faulkner, Mark Twain, and James Boswell also would be proud.

Actors with experience in radio were the obvious first choices when Talking Books were young, and so they have remained through the years. They are fluent sight-readers, and bring a rapport with the microphone that cannot be acquired overnight. Many otherwise skillful stage actors have been unable to bring the printed page to life for the listener. As a good actor must persuade the audience and himself that he is the character, the successful narrator of books must, subconsciously or not, adopt the personal tone of each

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author. The narrator becomes the author. It is identical to the one-to-one relationship obtaining between the sighted reader and the author. A recording is a success only if the listener is convinced that the author is telling his or her story directly. Dean Acheson once wrote to me that a friend who heard my recording of *Present at the Creation* was "sure I was in the house with them."

Biography and history can require prodigious advance preparation, especially when many foreign languages and names of places and people are involved. Bertrand Russell's *A History of Western Philosophy* required 13 hours of work with its 56-page index before the first word of 845 pages of text could be recorded. The Russell tome involved 31 sessions of two or more hours, five days a week, averaging about 27 pages per session. For contrast, a 355-page novel by Morris West, *The Salamander*, in larger type than Russell's book, averaged 47 pages per session, taking eight days in the studio.

Narrators are paid on a "piecework" basis, and all are paid at the same rate per hour of completed tape, far less than they might receive for commercial recording work or other professional activity. Regular narrators include a radio announcer, the star of a daytime TV serial, a university professor, a famous black actor, an actress currently in a Broadway hit, the voice behind 100 TV commercials, an actor about to leave for his next film in Hollywood, two actors playing off-off-Broadway, an actress just returned from a regional theater, and some actors "between engagements" who are happy to break off visits to the unemployment insurance office.

An escutcheon for Talking Books might display the unabridged dictionary embracing an atlas on a field of encyclopedias, above the motto, "Look It Up," printed in the phonetic alphabet: Luk it ʌp. Each volume on the studio's reference shelves displays the finger marks of constant use. On their own time, readers visit consulates, tourism and airlines offices, and specialist libraries throughout the city, and call department heads at universities. Some take the ultimate step, tracking down the author if he or she is alive and accessible by telephone somewhere in this country, only to discover, amazingly often, that it had never occurred to the writer to consider how some name might be pronounced.

Through the years, subtle aids were developed to enhance the listener's comprehension and enjoyment, without compromising the author's text. For example, efforts to provide authentic pronunciation of peculiar words or names are futile if the listener cannot relate to these unfamiliar sounds. So sometimes the narrator, casually and unobtrusively, interpolates the spelling in his account of the author's text. Also, when short phrases or passages in a foreign language are encountered, an English translation is sometimes offered in vocal parenthesis. Other minor changes of this sort became standard practice after consultation with the studio director.

The narrator of a book becomes its most vigilant proofreader. He cannot skim, his attention may not wander, he must concentrate on every word. The process of reading aloud often discloses misspellings of words or proper names, incorrect dates, and other varieties of publishing absent-mindedness. A word or a phrase may be so unclear as to suggest that a printing error has distorted the author's intention. Lines of type may be garbled, transposed, or missing, all common occurrences in paperback reprints.

Since Talking Books began, studio directors have had to expect constant interruption from readers asking advice on solving these sorts of problems. The conscientious reader would not shy from dialing the publisher, and asking to speak to the editor of a particular book. This might lead to direct consultation with the author as the final authority.

ALTHOUGH YEARS in the Talking Book studios will not make the actor rich or famous, participants agree that seldom in their other professional activities do they experience such stimulation in the practice of their vocation, such pleasure in serving a considerable social purpose, and such a bonus as the opportunity to read books they might never approach on their own initiative. "Reading here in my spare time," said Alexander Scourby, the unquestioned dean of narrators, "I've got around to reading all the Dostoevsky and Fielding and Sterne, and so on, that I'd otherwise still be meaning to read when I went to my grave."

American Foundation for the Blind was an idyllic refuge, an oasis of the intellect, until 1973. Then the studio director reached retirement age, and a new director was placed in charge of the National Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped in Washington. Only shards remain of the ivory tower.

The new regime in Washington soon began to crack down on deviations from the written text, from fears, improbable as they seem, that these infinitesimal adjustments affectionately described above, conceived only to bring author and listener closer together, might endanger copyright permissions. New rules emerged. Spell out a strange word or name? Strictly forbidden. Translate a foreign phrase into English? *Strengst verboten*. Substitute character names for personal pronouns at the beginning of a side? "It is not incumbent upon the narrator to presume the attention span of the listener." Provide a factual update of an older nonfiction book (for example, the death of a figure in a work of history) in the form of a reader's note? "Consumers of the talking book program are members of the general public and need not be characterized as special." Correct errors with the approval of the author? "Changing the print also places the listener in a position of access to information not available to the general public."

Deliberate perpetuation of printed errors, under

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ukase from Washington, is the most galling of all restrictions upon the narrator, who is concerned to protect his author from the vagaries of the typesetter. But the voice of NLS declares: "The blind and physically handicapped have indicated that they wish to be treated like everyone else and thus want no changes in the books when read."

Even so, a skeptic might ask, what inner vision informs the listener that the blatant error he hears comes from the printed page? Suppose that he has been following in a novel a shady character referred to as "the young Armenian" who is suddenly transformed into "the young American." Or he is attentive to careful explication of the Gospels in a history of Jesus, when the Old Testament remarkably shifts to the New. Or, *pace* Rand McNally, he learns that Julius Caesar crossed the Channel into Kent at the southwestern tip of Britain. Hundreds of recorded titles have been distributed by now with equivalent flaws intact. Does the listener really feel grateful for being treated no differently from anyone else in suffering these confusing errors?

The corps of proofreaders in Washington must shudder, like their New York counterparts, as they give a deaf ear to such mistakes, ever impeccably enunciated, while directing grave attention to chair squeaks, page rustles, lip smacks, stomach grumbles, or other heinous deviations from "high standards of recording" which may justify a tape's being returned to New York for correction.

A year ago, I wrote to Washington: "From frequent comparing of notes with my colleagues, I know that I speak for all readers when I urge high-level reconsideration by Washington of some of its present directives." I asked for the opportunity to come to Washington at my own expense "to discuss mutual problems." After some hounding I got myself invited to meet with the Library of Congress bureaucrats. I was told they would be pleased to meet in person a man who had recorded more than 225 titles in 16 years for the Talking Books program, but any mention of their directives must be excluded from conversation. I decided to save my money.

Since September 1979, the recording studios have found no further assignments for their previously busiest narrator. I had recorded 16 titles in 1978, including three months spent on Boswell's *Life of Samuel Johnson*, and 14 titles in 1979 up to the time that my letter reached Washington. The director of NLS, Frank Kurt Cylke (pronounced "silky"), has told me that "Narrators are hired for their voices, not for their intellectual ability," and that it would be "inappropriate" to discuss "narration criteria" with such "employees of an organization." Finally there was a letter from the American Federation for the Blind: "I feel that considering all the positive and negative aspects of your work, that the disharmony outweighs all other factors. We shall no longer be contracting for your services."

A devoted user of libraries, and annual contributor to some, has learned that the great Library of Congress is not immune to the diseases infecting any Washington bureaucracy, that the fiat over its fiefdoms may not be questioned and will be upheld by the highest echelon—until exposed to outside air. The ultimate power resides with authors and publishers, who have the unquestioned right to withhold further permissions. That is the final weapon. They should agree to use it.

Alan Hewitt

Alan Hewitt is an actor who has recorded many books.

In praise of cautious incompetence.

The War Issue

Now that we are, mercifully, in the final days of the campaign, and the two major candidates are about as indistinguishable in their degree of electoral support as they are in their appeal, foreign policy has become a major issue—sort of. Jimmy Carter, assuring us that "peace is my passion" and "peace is my pledge," hints darkly that his chief opponent has an itchy trigger finger. And Ronald Reagan, looking about as malicious as a choirboy, solemnly declares that of all his objectives, "first and foremost is the establishment of lasting world peace." Naturally Carter, to his mind, is frittering away this great opportunity.

It's reassuring to know that these are both self-declared men of peace. But then who isn't? Has anyone ever run for president as a warmonger? Remember the story about the Johnson-Goldwater election of 1964? "They told me that if I voted for Barry Goldwater we'd get into a big war in Vietnam," the man said. "Well, they were right. I voted for Goldwater and that's exactly what happened." Which is not to say that Jimmy Carter, or Ronald Reagan for that matter, seeks such a cataclysm. Nobody does. But governments can behave in ways that make such wars more likely. They do it even in the name of peace, or more commonly, of "defense."

Both Carter and Reagan are big on defense; they favor bigger military budgets and a more assertive military stance. Carter, having come into office four years ago with a pledge to slash military spending by some seven billion dollars, has now increased it significantly. He also has given the green light to a naval build-up in the Indian Ocean, the creation of a mobile interventionary brigade known as the Rapid Deployment Force, and, most significantly, construction of the multibillion dollar MX missile.

Does Reagan disagree with any of this? Not at all.

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John Anderson has come out against the MX on the grounds that it will intensify the arms race and make a nuclear war more likely. Reagan thinks it's just fine. He sees it as a necessary step in the effort to give the US clear military superiority over the Russians, or, in the new code, a "margin of safety." The loss of that superiority, he asserts in the now-familiar litany of the new right, lies at the root of all our troubles in the world. These could be corrected if only we would reassert "our resolve to preserve world peace and freedom" and zealously pursue "whatever it takes to be strong enough that no other nation will dare violate the peace."

This bid for military superiority is a familiar one. It has a certain appeal. But it means, as the president quite correctly has pointed out, an "uncontrolled nuclear arms race and almost certainly a new rupture in Soviet-American relations." Carter's response might seem a little less self-serving if he had not contributed to that arms race by approving the MX missile, and to that rupture in relations by his panicked reaction to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan.

Where Carter and Reagan differ is not in their dedication to military hardware, but in their style. Carter has now rediscovered the virtues of the SALT II treaty—a treaty whose chances he doomed by his handling of the phony issue of the Soviet troops in Cuba, and which he then abandoned after Afghanistan. Whether he would do any better getting SALT II through the Senate next year than he did last year remains open to question. But he has nonetheless pledged himself, at least theoretically, to some weapons restraint, and does not accept the rather quaint view expressed by Reagan that the Russians can be dragooned into accepted US nuclear superiority by the "possibility of an arms race."

THE ONE area in which they differ most significantly, though they almost never talk about it, is in relations with the third world. Here the Carter team has been sophisticated in its approach. It has tried to work with revolutionary nationalists rather than driving them to the Soviets as their only source of support. It has, at least in the Western Hemisphere, taken a stand against abuses of human rights, and has not assumed that reactionary dictatorships were in America's national interest. The overthrow of Somoza in Nicaragua and the negotiated transfer of power in Rhodesia would have been most unlikely under Reagan.

In most other areas of foreign affairs Carter has been inconstant and inept. Much of this has been due to inexperience and reliance on bad advisers—a problem likely to plague a Reagan administration. Relations with the Soviets have been allowed to deteriorate badly—a factor which may have influenced their decision to move into Afghanistan. Should Carter be reelected the guerrilla war between the State Department and the White House will likely continue, with all the vagaries of policy to which that has already led. On the other hand, there have been some accomplishments: the Panama Canal treaty, the Rhodesia settlement, and that mixed blessing, the Camp David accords.

Would that Reagan offered a credible alternative, or that John Anderson were a viable candidate. But it is clear that the voters do not share the enthusiasm of my *TNR* colleagues for Anderson. And it is equally clear that Reagan and his foreign policy advisers, a curious collection of cold war fundamentalists and ambitious academics, see themselves as participants in some kind of macho melodrama. Their view of the world, as Stanley Hoffmann has tellingly written, is "a rhetorical attitude, not a strategy, an act of faith, not a political design." They are to a responsible foreign policy what the Moral Majority is to morality.

BUT THEN the so-called foreign policy "debate" has not been about foreign policy at all. It has been primarily about military hardware, and to a lesser degree about Soviet scripture. For several years the new right has been spreading the message that the Russians are intent on gobbling up the world and that they now (or soon will) have the means to do so. These doomsday prophets put great emphasis on Marxist ideology, with its heavenly visions of the ultimate triumph of the proletarian revolution. Such emphasis is entirely proper since these fundamentalists are ideologues themselves, perhaps the last true believers in the power of Lenin's message. The fact that the Soviet Union is among the world's most conservative nations, using ideology as a means of justifying an oppressive and inefficient status quo, in no way diminishes their belief in its power.

They also hold a remarkably exalted view of Soviet military strength. In their zeal for vastly expanded American weaponry they not only overestimate Soviet power, but deliberately denigrate America's own military forces. Of late the press—including the *New York Times*, whose Pentagon correspondent ill-conceals his sympathy for the hardliners—has been treating the public to lurid accounts of the nation's supposed military inferiority. "Nation's Military Anxiety Grows as Russians Gain," read a front-page article in the *Times* last month. The slant of the headline, and of the article, seems designed to intensify the anxiety.

Figures are often distorted to buttress this sense of inferiority. But in fact it is the Soviets who are inferior. Military spending by NATO in 1979 was $215 billion, by the Warsaw pact, $175 billion. NATO forces outnumber those of the Warsaw Pact 5.1 million to 4.8 million. Neither figure includes China, which must be ranked with the enemies of the Soviet Union. Nor do they take into account the unreliability of the East European armies. NATO's naval forces are strikingly superior to those of the Warsaw Pact. Even on the nuclear level the United States has an advantage of 9,500 strategic warheads compared to 6,000 for the

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Soviets—if such "superiority" has any meaning at all.

It is true that the United States is in the process of losing its nuclear advantage. But this is not a new condition. It has been going on for a long time, ever since the Bay of Pigs nearly 20 years ago, when the Soviets determined that they would never again allow themselves to be put in such a position. Today there is no way in which the United States can regain its lost nuclear superiority. The best it can hope for is parity. This is the purpose of the SALT II treaty which Carter has now cynically revived on the eve of the elections, and which Reagan says must be scrapped in favor of some more ideal accord which presumably will enshrine American strategic superiority. How he proposes to get the Russians to sign such an agreement remains unexplained.

The gist of the Reaganite argument is that the frustrations experienced by the United States in recent years are caused by military weakness. Thus Irving Kristol, an entertaining essayist and a generally reliable guide to fundamentalist thinking, makes the remarkable suggestion that not only will the Russians quake, but that "the profound revulsion against a hitherto dominant Western civilization that is gaining momentum in the Arab Moslem world, or the anti-white racism that is becoming the dominant theme of African politics, or the *Marxisant* anti-Americanism endemic in Latin America" will be triumphantly surmounted by a tough guy in the White House. That's a big order, professor, even for the meanest gun that ever came out of Sacramento.

The truth of the matter is that very few of the things that bother Professor Kristol and his friends have much to do with American military power. A US nuclear monopoly did not prevent, and could not have prevented, the Soviet takeover of Eastern Europe or the Maoist revolution in China. US strategic superiority did not stop the Soviets from signing up Egypt as a client in the 1950s, any more than it led the Egyptians to kick them out in 1973, or than it persuaded the Chinese to launch an undeclared war on Moscow "hegemonists." It did not spark the "Prague spring" in 1968 or the Polish workers' rebellion in 1980. It is, for the most part, irrelevant to the problems that confront the United States today—as the current war in the Persian Gulf makes evident.

The idea that military power can provide a quick fix for our troubles is a form of romantic nostalgia. The old days of nuclear superiority were never as good as they seem in retrospect. Anyone who remembers the late 1940s and early 1950s, with their hallucinations of Reds on every street corner, can vouch for that. We were anxious then because the Russians were playing their game, not ours. And we are anxious today for reasons that have far more to do with the kind of world we live in than with the Russians. The MX missile will not, alas, make us less dependent on imported oil, or give us any more control over nationalistic revolutions. "Most of the difficult issues in the Third World today . . . have come about for local and regional reasons that would have operated irrespective of the global military balance," writes William Bundy, who has had some experience in such matters.

Although one would not know it from the campaign, there are serious foreign policy issues facing the United States today—issues that cannot be resolved by building more missiles or challenging the Russians to a game of nuclear chicken. One would like to be able to vote for a candidate who addressed himself seriously to the question of how the United States can reduce its dependency on Middle Eastern oil, how it can stanch the hemorrhaging effect of military spending on its overall economic and social needs, how it can achieve a less costly and more cooperative relationship with its European and Japanese allies, how it can maintain friendly ties with China and not be manipulated, how it can accommodate itself to third world nationalistic eruptions that it cannot control, and above all how it can restore a sundered dialogue with the Soviets.

Perhaps John Anderson has some answers. He at least knows that these are serious questions. But he is not going to be the next president of the United States. We are stuck with what the system has produced, and the prospect is not an encouraging one. Between Reagan's simplistic militancy and Carter's unpredictable wobblings, we are left with the likelihood of a diplomacy that will be ineffectual at best, and quite likely dangerous.

On that stormy voyage it will be the task of those who discern some landmarks to do their best to keep the captain from running the ship aground. Carter is a known quantity. Hardly inspiring, but not a disaster either. He is, after all, the first president since Eisenhower who ended a four-year term without having sent Americans off to war. History will be kinder to him than are his contemporaries. Even the inept Ike is being rehabilitated by a new generation of revisionists. So will Carter be.

Reagan, on the other hand, is an unknown. What he would do once in office, whether he would call his own shots, or whether he would leave the decisions to his shadowy, and far from inspiring, lieutenants, no one knows. Finding out the hard way may be a chance too risky to take. Many argue that Carter should be punished for being so inept. They are no doubt right. But the more important question is whether, by giving him his comeuppance, we may be socking ourselves in the jaw.

Cautious incompetence is not normally a sterling ground for recommendation. But there are worse alternatives. Like ideological recklessness. And that, it appears, is the baleful choice we are facing.

Ronald Steel

Ronald Steel writes biweekly on foreign affairs for *TNR*. His latest book is *Walter Lippmann and the American Century* (Little, Brown/ Atlantic Monthly Press).

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Further Arabian Nights of the president's brother.

Qaddafi, Arafat, and Billy Carter

by Arnaud de Borchgrave and Michael Ledeen

When Billy Carter was in Libya enjoying the hospitality of Libyan dictator Muammar Qaddafi, the leading financier of international terrorism, he also met with two of its leading practitioners: Yasser Arafat, head of the Palestine Liberation Organization, and George Habash, leader of the most extremist Palestinian group, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine. These gentlemen met more than once, and there were photographs taken, but they are not obtainable.

Our investigation into Colonel Qaddafi's international operations has turned up some other interesting items about his dealings with Billy Carter that haven't surfaced previously. For example, Billy received a previously unreported $50,000 from the Libyans, labeled as traveling expense money, as well as his $220,000 "loan." And at least once Billy's brother, President Carter, has interceded with Egyptian president Anwar Sadat to call off Egyptian attempts to topple Qaddafi.

The most useful new source of information about Qaddafi's designs is an important Libyan official who recently defected to Western Europe, where he is living clandestinely because he knows that Qaddafi has ordered his assassination. (Qaddafi has sent assassins to pursue his enemies throughout the West. Just last week a Libyan graduate student who criticized the Qaddafi regime was critically wounded by an execution-style shooting in his own living room in Colorado.) Mohammed Youssouf al-Mougariaf, the defector, was head of a special watchdog committee for Libyan state funds. A former ambassador, he held cabinet rank and attended many secret meetings addressed by Qaddafi. Al-Mougariaf confirmed what Western intelligence officials have known since the early 1970s: "Libya's intelligence operation—both internal and external—is run by East Germany. Libya has become a key strategic base for the Soviet Union. Seventy percent of Libya's oil revenue is spent on Soviet arms and paying for terrorist and subversive operations all over the world. More than 9,000 terrorists from scores of countries are now undergoing training in several camps in Libya."

The Foreign Liaison Office in Tripoli, which arranged for the $220,000 payments to Billy Carter, is part of the Libyan Secret Service. The purpose of the Foreign Liaison Office was to place agents of influence in Western capitals. Among its other activities, the Foreign Liaison Office established contacts with American blacks, students, academics, and Americans of Arab descent. Billy Carter's principal Libyan contact, Ahmad Al-Shahati, is the head of this office. The payments to Billy Carter were thus part of a broad pattern of activities designed to increase Libyan influence all over the Western world, particularly in Washington.

Libya's intelligence network has been built by General Markus Wolf, now 57, head of the external branch of East Germany's Intelligence Service, the MFS, for the last 20 years. His agents have helped create or reorganize the secret services of Angola, Mozambique, South Yemen, Ethiopia, and Libya. Working with the KGB, these new surrogates have been used to establish links with international terrorist cells. The terrorists who killed Israel's Olympic athletes in Munich in 1972 were trained in Libya, and the weapons they used had been smuggled in by Libyan diplomatic couriers.

This same network stands behind the Billy Carter affair. The president's younger brother was invited to Libya by one of Qaddafi's agents in Italy, Michele Papa of Catania. For many years, Papa was one of the leading exponents of Qaddafi's pet scheme to promote the cause of Sicilian separatism. He acquired notoriety—and money as well—as president of the Sicilian-Arab Association, and organizer of activities ranging from the illegal recruitment of Sicilian workers for projects in Libya to the financing of Italian and foreign journalists sympathetic to the Libyan cause.

In the summer of 1977 an Atlanta businessman named Mario Leanza, who bragged of his contacts with the Carter family, came to Catania on vacation. There he met Papa. Through Leanza, Papa invited Billy Carter, on behalf of the Sicilian-Arab Association, to visit Libya. The offer was accepted late in the summer of 1978.

Billy and his traveling party stopped in Italy on their way to Libya in September 1978. There was a party in their honor at the Cavalieri Hilton in Rome. According to an eyewitness account, it was wild. At the height of the revelry, Billy launched into an impersonation of his brother the president. Addressing one of the Libyans in the room as "Colonel Qaddafi," Billy, playing Jimmy, promised to provide him American military equipment. When the former Libyan ambassador to Italy, Gibril Shaluff, entered the party and saw the scene, he attempted to get all the guests—including several prostitutes—to leave at once, but he was unsuccessful.

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The party girls were later told to leave town.

Billy Carter has denied consistantly that his Libyan adventures had any political content, and has said specifically that he never discussed a matter very dear to the heart of the Libyan dictator: the eight C-130 military transport planes Qaddafi ordered in 1973, which were embargoed by the US government because of Libya's support for international terrorism. But Mario Leanza, the Atlanta businessman, told journalists from the London *Sunday Times* that Billy had promised to "do something" about the C-130s on Qaddafi's behalf when he returned to the United States.

Leanza also has said the Carter group told the Libyan ambassador in Rome that they would not continue their trip unless the Libyans came up with $50,000 above and beyond the money already provided to cover traveling expenses. Michele Papa confirmed this in a long conversation with one of our Italian investigators. Papa said that the $50,000 was paid to Carter sometime later by a Libyan merchant. This transaction does not appear in the official records of Billy Carter's dealings with the Libyan government.

PAPA ALSO confirmed to our top investigator what we had been told by a top Western intelligence source: that Billy had several meetings with Palestinian leaders while in Libya, including Arafat and Habash. Habash is the Palestinian leader with the closest ties to Soviet intelligence, and the most fiery in his demands for the destruction of the state of Israel. Papa, who talked only reluctantly, said that the encounters took place during a "great popular celebration," which suggests that the meetings were held during the 10th anniversary celebration of Qaddafi's revolution. This was in September 1979, when Billy Carter spent three weeks in Libya negotiating his oil importing contracts with the Libyan government. Papa tried to minimize the significance of these events, saying that Carter just happened to be in the same hotel as the Palestinians. But Palestinian leaders usually are housed in special government villas in Libya, not in hotels. Papa also confirmed that photographs were taken of the three men together, but said that "those photographs are out of print." Billy Carter declined to return our phone calls about this matter.

Billy's activities on behalf of his new friends in Libya are well known: he made numerous public statements in favor of Qaddafi and the PLO; he criticized the behavior of the American Jewish community; he suggested that America ought to pay more attention to Arabs, because there are more of them than there are Jews; and he accompanied a Libyan delegation on a "goodwill tour" of the United States. That much is on the public record, as is President Carter's decision to use his brother as an intermediary to the Libyans at the beginning of the hostage crisis in November 1979. This unconventional diplomacy—involving a meeting in the White House of Brzezinski, Billy Carter, and the Libyan chargé in Washington—produced no results whatsoever, except to improve Billy's standing with the Libyans.

Billy's brother, the president, also did at least one big favor for Qaddafi during the last part of 1979. According to Egyptian and West European government officials, Carter intervened with President Sadat to halt a major military operation against Libya. Sadat had been driven to this drastic decision by several plots against his life by Libyan agents. As Mougariaf put it, "the number one target is to assassinate Sadat. Once at a Council of Ministers I attended, [Qaddafi] proposed that we starve Cairo in order to trigger an uprising against Sadat. When we asked how this was to be done, Qaddafi replied, 'release whatever funds are necessary to buy out all the food stores in Cairo.' Then he went one better, 'let's buy up all of Egypt's currency.'"

Sadat is not the only pro-Western leader on Qaddafi's hit list. Qaddafi has launched innumerable plots to assassinate Morocco's King Hassan, Tunisia's Habib Bourguiba, and the Sudan's Numeiry.

Under the circumstances, Sadat's decision to try to topple the Qaddafi regime is understandable. But Carter's intervention to stop Sadat need not necessarily be read as an endorsement of Qaddafi. Carter may have feared that a conflict between Egypt and Libya would have brought the Soviets racing to the side of their North African surrogate. Or he might have worried that Egypt, so essential to America's peace policy in the Middle East, might get hopelessly bogged down in the Libyan desert. Qaddafi is convinced that he now has a friend in the White House. He has repeatedly boasted of a major breakthrough in acquiring influence in Washington. He told the *Washington Post* on January 9, "I believe President Carter has promised to radically change American policy on the Middle East" if Carter is reelected for a second term.

IS QADDAFI'S belief that he has succeeded in acquiring influence justified? It was shortly after Billy's second trip to Libya that President Carter acted to prevent Sadat from moving against Qaddafi. And when the hostages were seized in Tehran, the president decided to use his brother as an intermediary with a Qaddafi regime that the Ayatollah Khomeini had accused of murdering a leading Shiite mullah. On December 6, 1979, the Libyan chargé in Washington was granted the extraordinary privilege of being received in the Oval Office—the first Libyan official invited to the president's office since Qaddafi's revolution in 1969—even though the American embassy in Tripoli had been attacked by a mob only four days before. According to President Carter's personal notes, which he released to the Senate committee investigating Billy Carter's Libyan connection, the president told the Libyan chargé at this meeting that if the matter of the attack on the embassy "was resolved successfully . . . we would try in every way to improve consultations with Libya and long-range relations with them."

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And what is this regime the Carter administration is eager for better relations with? "Qaddafi's obsession," said Libyan defecter Mougariaf, "is to acquire an atomic bomb, and he is sparing no financial effort to develop this capability. He has offered millions to foreign scientists. A huge underground complex is now being built between Tripoli and Bengazi that is designed to shelter atomic installations when and if he gets them. It is also his last redoubt. The world must know this: the man is mad."

The low-voltage lover.

Cahiers de Reagan

by Peter W. Kaplan

OK, OK, Ronnie got the girl. "A truism of many writers," he complained to the *Washington Post* this year, "is that in motion pictures I was the fellow who never got the girl. Well, I always got the girl." Once more he has set the record straight on a crucial fact. In *The Cattle Queen of Montana* he got the girl. (So, Barbara Stanwyck was 44, she was still the girl.) In *Brother Rat and a Baby* he got the girl. (It was his own wife, Jane Wyman, but he got her.) In *That Hagen Girl* he got the girl. (Shirley Temple was accused of being his illegitimate child—it's a great one.) So let's not perpetuate that one anymore. He got the girl, all right.

Reagan never got to make a John Ford picture, so he has found real-life opportunities to play Ford roles, with a little Frank Capra thrown in. As Screen Actors Guild president he learned to speak as a marshall holding off the federal authorities with one hand and the Indians with the other. When, in 1947, HUAC's J. Parnell Thomas asked his witness to help "make America just as pure as we can possibly make it," Reagan answered: "Sir, I detest, I abhor their philosophy [you know whose], but I detest more than that their tactics, which are those of the fifth column, and are dishonest. But at the same time I never as a citizen want to see our country become urged, by either fear or resentment of this group, that we ever compromise with any of our democratic principles through that fear or resentment. I still think democracy can do it."

What a voice! There's hollow good sense and moderation, decency and wariness, compassion and a clear eye toward the founding fathers (a group Reagan often refers to in speeches with a familiarity that really undercuts the age issue: "Tom" Paine, "Tom" Jefferson, probably "Jack" Adams is next). It sounds like the last reel of a Warners Brothers picture. Just substitute "Apaches" for the "fifth column" and you're right there with a box of Jujubes and a cup of Mr. Deelish.

Take a more recent example: Reagan's peroration at the Baltimore debate with John Anderson. Just imagine Reagan in a waistcoat, knickers, ruffled shirt, on a soundstage:

"I have always believed that this land was placed here between the two great oceans by some divine plan." (He is lit from above.) "It was placed here to be found by a special kind of people, people who had a special love for freedom and who had the courage to uproot themselves and leave hearth and homeland." (Cut to old man in Copenhagen packing the family lederhosen, putting children in a trunk, kissing the fireplace goodbye—gently on the flagstones.) "And come to what in the beginning was the most undeveloped wilderness possible. We came from over 100 corners of the earth." (Shot of globe with 100 corners. *Props*: can it be done?) "We spoke a multitude of tongues, landed on the eastern shore and then went over the mountains and the prairies and the deserts—" (Shot of Gabby Hayes and Ella Raines on the front seat of a stagecoach.) "and the far western mountains of the Pacific building cities and towns and farms and schools and churches." (Superspeed shots of Gabby Hayes and Ella Raines, nails in mouth, building all these in sequence.) "If wind, rain or fire destroyed them, we built them again." (Shot of Gabby Hayes doing them all over while Ella Raines flaps jacks in the background.) "And in so doing at the same time we built a new breed of human called American." (Photo of Reagan building Jack Kemp.) "A proud, an independent, and a most compassionate individual—" (Kemp waves in field, feeds nuts to cows, milch to squirrels.) "for the most part." (Kemp endorses Ford.)

"Two hundred years ago, Tom Paine—" (Shot of Paine and Reagan in school together.) "when the 13 colonies were trying to become a nation, said we have it in our power to begin the world over again." (On Griffith-like silent screen, hundreds of revolutionary soldiers and Young Republicans rush up to Tom Paine

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Ronald Reagan in *Hellcats of the Navy* **(1957).**
Photos from *The Films of Ronald Reagan* **by Tony Thomas (Citadel Press).**

with welding irons, safety helmets, and Lincoln logs.) "And tonight we can build that world over again. We can meet our destiny and that destiny can build a land here that will be for all mankind a shining city on the hill." (*Props Dept.*: please build shining city, on hill. Don't make it look like Manhattan.) "I think we ought to get at it." (Music: traditional, "Turkey in Straw," "Yankee Muster March," "Begin the Beguine." Warner Brothers sign-off.)

If you look at the best of Frank Capra's pictures, or any of the good liberal message pictures from the 1930s, there's almost always the Speech at the end, winding and weaving to Hollywood's idea of rhetorical heights, peaking with an emotional invocation, subsiding (but actually building) with a revelatory statement of experience, closing with some variation on the "I guess I've said just about enough but let me just say this" idea. That's when you drop the bomb and get the crowd on your side. In Frank Capra's first political tract, *Mr. Deeds Goes to Town*, Gary Cooper gets to slam the shyster lawyer Cedar in the chin after his final summation. In Reagan's first star-class picture, *Knute Rockne, All-American*, Pat O'Brien's Notre Dame team got the Speech and were sent out on the field to "win one for the Gipper!"

The Gipper, no need to remind you, was our boy, good and shining and fresh. He should have gotten to deliver one of those speeches, but he never did. He didn't have kick. The decency and selflessness of the Gipp—an American who saw in his death only the greater good of the team, Pat O'Brien, and the forward pass—made him a star, but not enough of a star to carry a big speech of his own. He was full of the kind of strapping integrity that was our answer to the Soviet worker, but here are a few of the things he wasn't: hard enough to be a hero who punched with conviction, evocative enough to get an audience to feel pain or joy in his experience, agile enough to play comedy. Three things he was good at were looking steadfast, expressing sympathy, and pursing his lips. He didn't kiss well and he smothered every joke. His greatest talent was the ability to look like he believed what he was saying.

He exuded sincerity. Only Gary Cooper and Jimmy Stewart did it better. "I only started out with one little lie," he says to Edward Arnold, the bloated senator in *John Loves Mary*—a sleek, postwar high-class comedy that Reagan did against his will—"but with your help, Senator, this darn thing has grown and grown and with pictures in the newspapers and generals and War Departments and Majors until I don't know where it's going to stop. It's even gotten so Mary doesn't believe I love her. I do love you, Mary." He looks like he's on the verge of a faint. His jaw's out and his eyebrows are knitted with anxiety.

Rent a movie projector today; you owe it to your country. There he stands with Patricia Neal, pursing his lips (was there another man in the movies who used that as his main device for expressing anger?), working like mad to look embarrassed (is *this* what it looks like? he seems to be saying, with no frame of reference) or angry or tense (finger in the collar, gulping), kissing her finally with 60 watts of passion.

From the end of the Depression through the war he shot through dozens of those pictures for the studio. He usually played stiffs, the voice of honesty, gratitude, and approved values, the type of "young man we're going to need if we're going to rise out of the current crisis, this Depression." "That guy's got the idea you can't get married unless you're on a budget," Chestor Morris says in *Brother Rat*, jerking his thumb back at Reagan. "Just a minute, junior," Reagan answers. "I want to make a point. Don't even toy with any ideas of going out after dinner. Because we haven't got *any money*. Got that? No dough! Besides, I want to get back to the office and work!" What a guy.

He was a New Deal construction, a dependable comrade whose good sense and midwestern values would get him through anything, no more capable of dissoluteness or perversity than Joan Leslie or Rex the Wonder Horse. Things went awfully well for him; gee, he wrote articles in *Photoplay* on "Why I Like Acting" and talked to Louella Parsons. Sam Wood, a good director and later a HUAC friendly witness, put Reagan in *King's Row* in 1942. Nowhere else in the Reagan *oeuvre* can you find as good a piece of work, or a part as close to what he seems to be in real life. *King's Row* considers a small town making a transition from the 19th into the 20th century. Reagan plays Drake McHugh, a rich scamp whose fortune is stolen from the bank president, who is forced to go to work in the rail yards, who is struck by a train and has his legs amputated unnecessarily by a psychotic town doctor as punishment for his years of rakishness. Drake gets saved by the new

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science, psychoanalysis (his childhood best friend has gone to study in Vienna). The picture streams along without a clue about its point, until it becomes clear that it's a paean to progress and a good life for the common man. When Reagan rides up, early on, in a boater and bowtie to say to Robert Cummings and Ann Sheridan, "Howdya like my new horse and buggy? I got my allowance yesterday!" he gives the picture a sure ease and comfort, as though he knows the territory. It's a rarity in a Reagan picture, this surefooted work. We enjoy this Drake McHugh, and Reagan gets us to like him more. He communicates a great deal in a warm, sensitive performance, and when, during his big scene after the amputation, he yells "Randy! Randy! Where's the rest of me?" it sticks. At the end of the picture he resolves, with Ann Sheridan, to build a new neighborhood, a good neighborhood, where kids can play and working people can live decently. He sits upright and grins, "For Pete's sake! Let's give a party! I feel swell!" There's happiness in his voice that's unself-conscious, that hardly surfaces as spontaneously anywhere else in his pictures, that moves the audience. The All-American boy endures vibrantly, past adversity.

After the war, Warner Brothers didn't know exactly what to do with him. *King's Row* had gotten him a seven-year million dollar contract, but the movies had changed. *Film noir* was creeping in, and so had sad heroes who walked around in the real world. Reagan wanted to make Westerns, but Jack Warner had other projects for him. He played veterinarians and professors, scientists and teachers. Not a boxer or a murderer in the bunch. Who'd want to see them? In a 1949 dog called *Night Unto Night*, from a Philip Wylie novel, he played an epileptic but he looked catatonic. His mouth kept tightening as though he'd been on an all-lemon diet. He seemed to grow lonelier and lonelier in his pictures, and more distant from the places where good movies were being made.

Ronald Reagan and Margaret Lindsay in *Hell's Kitchen* (1939).

In 1951 he co-starred with Bonzo in *Bedtime for Bonzo*. Whatever you've heard about *Bedtime for Bonzo*, it's true: Reagan nurses the chimpanzee, sleeps with the chimpanzee, stands on his head with the chimpanzee. "Believe me," he told Michael Kramer of *New York* magazine recently, "you must have credibility . . . now you take my role in *Bedtime for Bonzo*." This is a quotation you don't want to finish without taking a moment to wonder what comes next. All right. "I was a scientist who raised a chimp as a child in my home. It was a huge money-maker, terrific. People could believe in it. But then the studio decided to make a sequel called *Bonzo Goes to College*. I refused to play in it. It bombed. Who could believe a chimp could go to college and play on the college team? It lacked credibility." There was guileless Ron, taking the night he put a lampshade over his head and turning it into a medal of honor—Bonzo had credibility.

His conservatism grew as his acting career faded. As Screen Actors Guild president, Reagan began to associate more and more with the businessmen who ran Hollywood, attending meetings with studio heads like Louis B. Mayer and Jack Warner. By the mid-1950s he was speaking for General Electric. He went on to host for Borax. If his acting career had gone on, he'd be playing doctors on television now and doing Nytol ads. He'd probably be on *Health Center, U.S.A.*, in a white coat and stethoscope, saying, "Mrs. Heatterson, Willie's what we call 'dyslexic.' We have here a battery of tests I'd like him to take. . . ." He would be raising money for California legislature candidates and speaking to state conventions until even people with good memories like middle-aged encyclopedics and TV quiz show contestants couldn't exactly remember who he was.

Even these days his previous life is hardly known. A few months ago, I spent a long time watching Reagan for a glossy magazine. The editor allowed me to rent some of his pictures, and while he was out of town I showed them in his somewhat cavernous office. A few of us would sit there in the dark among the film cans and the power of the movies would take over until we forgot we were waiting for Reagan. Then at some point this young man walked across the lit wall carrying a high head of shining hair, great shoulders, and the integrity of a boys' choir. He spoke his words and we flipped the projecter switch and watched him grab the girl in the movie backward and forward maybe a dozen times. He told her the only thing in the world that mattered to him was for her to marry him. She smiled and kissed him. There in the dark he got the girl. His life, he told her, was complete. She seemed like a nice person. Too bad the movie ended before a hero could climb in through the window to save her.

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Books and the Arts

Stanley Kauffmann on films

Waiting for Godard

It's supposed to be a truism that the best way to criticize art is to make an art work that demonstrates what you think the art ought to be doing. If that truism is true, then unquestionably the most influential film critic in the world in the last 20 years has been Jean-Luc Godard. His films, which poured out from 1960 to 1971, were increasingly severe rejections of cinematic status quo, and they have had more influence by far on new filmmakers than those of any other contemporaries, some of whom I admire much more. No matter what one thinks of Godard, his importance is impossible to deny, even by those of us who have not always been enthusiastic about the films themselves or their influence.

The first Godard feature, *Breathless*, was an explosion: it helped to propel film thinking into the postwar aesthetic-moral environment that had already affected other arts. Many of his many subsequent films in the 1960s seemed to inflate that initial radicalism into luxuriant self-indulgence. But in the last few years I've been seeing some Godard again with students—*Breathless*, *Pierrot le Fou*, *Masculine Feminine*, *Two or Three Things I Know about Her*. They look different, of course—even trash looks different 10 years later—and the differences are interesting. First, though numerous of these students had not seen Godard before (which would have been unlikely 10 years ago), they didn't find him especially revolutionary, which is another way of saying that at least some of what he innovated has been ingested into film procedure. Second, except for *Pierrot* which still seems merely arrogant and attitudinizing, the films seem more sincere: wrestling with large ideas in ways that challenge film procedures for reasons other than high spirits or exhibitionism. Third, they also seem poignant: part of an era that passed quickly.

Nothing of Godard's has been shown publicly in the US since 1971 when he was in his Maoist stage, after he had rejected everything he had done through *Weekend* as bourgeois. Now there's a new Godard, and its arrival makes clear what a gap his inactivity made. Like or dislike or loathe him, his presence was galvanic. Perhaps we didn't know how we had been waiting for him, even as irritant.

Every Man for Himself, which is apparently set in French Switzerland, has a screenplay by Jean Claude Carrière and Anne-Marie Miéville, and Miéville co-edited it with Godard. Both those facts are anomalous: Godard has usually done his own scripts and all his own editing. A 30-ish man (Jacques Dutronc) is separated from his wife and 11-year-old daughter and is having an affair with a TV woman (Nathalie Baye) who is leaving him. (He's named Godard, wears glasses, smokes cigars, but I can't see that this is any more relevant than that the TV woman is named Rimbaud.) These relationships seem to be the area of the film's action until the man patronizes a prostitute (Isabelle Huppert) and the film suddenly encloses her life as well—her troubles with her pimp, her meetings with her sister, and so on. Some fusion of the two areas is attempted at the end, just as arbitrarily as the prostitute's life was brought in earlier. (I saw this film at its first public showing, sitting next to a middle-aged couple. Afterward, she said to him: "You want to sit through it again and see if we can understand it?" He declined, but I thought the question an oblique compliment to Godard: 20 years ago they might not have sat through it once.)

For me, *Every Man for Himself* contained a contradiction. On the one hand, it's full of the customary Godard pyrotechnics: part titles for different parts that are intrinsically undifferentiated; rapid intercutting from strand to strand less for counterpoint than to jab us; the disjuncture of sight and sound—the sound-track of one scene playing against the pictures of another; and of course the ruthless, distanced wit. When the man is hit by a car—what we see is the man rolling over the hood in slow motion—he falls to the ground and thinks: "I can't be dying. My life isn't flashing before my eyes." (Godard's mother was killed in a car accident in 1954; he himself was in a bad motorcycle smash in 1971.) When Huppert is chastised by her pimp, who wants to teach her that independence is impossible for anyone, she isn't badly beaten, her jeans are pulled down and she is spanked in the back of a car.

Apropos of that last, the film's tone about sex—much of it verbally detailed, though never seen—is always cool, almost amoral. The man talks about wanting to look at his daughter's body as if he wants to look at her report card. When Huppert's sister says she needs money and wants to become a prostitute too, Huppert asks to see her breasts, questions her about the rest of her body and her willingness to perform certain services as if she were interviewing a file clerk. When Huppert goes out on tricks, her (wealthy) customers aren't even horny: they just try to think of things for her to do that will amuse and stimulate them and humiliate her. God-

Films Worth Seeing

Airplane! Just what you'd always wanted to happen in an airplane disaster picture: chaos. Hilarious chaos. Skyhigh jinks.

The Chant of Jimmie Blacksmith. A rich and excellently acted Australian film about a half-caste abused into murder, c. 1900. If it fails to reach tragedy, it reaches quite a lot.

Divine Madness. Bette Midler, not acting as in *The Rose*, just performing. Her talent pulls it past its (very) low spots.

Kagemusha. A genius returns. Akira Kurosawa's new film about 16th-century Japanese warriors doesn't reach the height of his *Seven Samurai*, but it's magnificent.

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ard has often used prostitution as a figure for money power, for male exploitation/hatred of women, and as an occasion for implied puritanism. In *Two or Three Things*, for instance, all these things are true, especially the last: the whoring scenes are icy. All these things are truer in *Every Man*, and the sex scenes seem even icier because they are more complicated, therefore more mechanical.

The above characteristics and devices tend to make us think that the old Godard is back again, for good or ill: back with a stock-in-trade of radicalisms as reliable as any hack director's stock of conventionalities. On the other hand, every once in a while—every five minutes, according to a young filmmaker who saw the picture with me—Godard does something, sometimes quite slight, to make us aware that out beyond the borders of accepted film, even *his* accepted films, is an unexplored territory, that what is so far known is only the coast of a continent. He throws in slow motion and freeze-frames, not (as most directors do) to end a sequence or italicize a point but to anatomize commonplace action (a girl on a bicycle) or to exercise command of time. He counterposes country and city life in ways that undermine sentimentalities about each. Fundamentally he attacks narrative. For instance, he reminds us by sudden shifts to completely peripheral characters that this film is about Dutronc and Baye and Huppert only because he says so; that narrative is a system of falsifications, selections and emphases imposed on life; that we only *hope* it may lead to truth—when we don't hope it will lead to a para-truth, to a construct of consolations.

photo of Godard by Paul Popper

This attack on narrativity is not new in Godard, but it is the one radicalism of his that has kept freshest; also his mode of using it has changed. He used to fight the constrictions of film pretenses by displaying some of them: a sequence would begin by showing the slate, a pan would end by showing another camera and its crew. Now he goes further than showing us that film is make-believe. He understands that narrative is a cultural contract and that he is imprisoned in the culture. Archimedes said that if only he could step off the earth, he could move it with a lever. Godard can't step out of his culture to shift its basic cultural arrangements, but like Archimedes, he can at least show us what he would do if he could.

Liking or disliking *Every Man for Himself* doesn't seem to me a primary question. After a long wait, Godard is back, a force in the film world to admire or abhor. The most effective critic is criticizing again.

Note on Theory. Godard has been making a stir at press conferences, in New York and elsewhere, by stating that the *auteur* theory, of which he was a leading voice, was fabricated by him and others in the early days of the New Wave "just to protect ourselves." Well, François Truffaut, once close to Godard and now estranged, said five years ago that the *auteur* theory "is forgotten in France, but still discussed in American periodicals." I, always a dissident from the *auteur* theory, think these disclaimers have to be taken at something more than face value, as efforts to escape pigeonhole (Truffaut) or revise the past (Godard). Besides, the *auteur* view—essentially a reordering of critical priorities to make the director's contribution decisive—did a limited corrective service against the ignoring or ignorance of the director's contribution. But what about the fanatical auteurists who took every Godard-Truffaut burp as gospel? What are they to do now that canon law has been blasted? How are they to revise their pasts, or persist past the blasting?

I couldn't help thinking of myself vis-à-vis a cartoon that appeared in the *New Yorker* some years ago when the Vatican altered its law against meat-eating on Friday. The scene is Hell, with the Devil on his throne and an assistant devil approaching out of the flames beyond. The assistant asks: "Say, boss, what are we going to do with all those people who ate meat on Friday?" Well, I don't suppose there's any chance that we cinematic meat-eaters will be pardoned.

Robert Brustein on theater

A Remake and a Revival

I've remarked at length upon the Pavlovian effect of remakes on the nostalgia glands of contemporary Americans, so it's comforting to find an impressive proof of this chemical reaction—*42nd Street*—being demonstrated at the Winter Garden. To judge from the audience clamor and the tumult at the box office, listening to the melodies and wisecracks of an earlier age is tantamount to soaking for three hours in a steaming tub filled with lemon verbena bath oil. Still, this particular equation represents something more than the commercial exploitation of an earlier popular success, which is the formula of most remakes. It has been formulated (and discussed) as if it were the reworking of an ancient myth. *42nd Street* offers itself in relationship to the 1930s source original in much the same manner as, say, T.S. Eliot's *Family Reunion* does to Aeschylus's *Libation Bearers*. If you chew on this for a while, you'll get something of the flavor of a culture which—lacking a heroic past or a shared body of literature—has no better place to go for traditional materials than the myth and magic of 50 years of Hollywood movies.

It's the show's assumption that every spectator knows the deathless line at the climax of the old Dick Powell-Ruby Keeler movie when the producer, Julian Marsh, having just lost his leading lady to a twisted ankle, says to the gallant little hoofer from the chorus whom he wants to replace her: "Sawyer, you're going out there a youngster, but you've got to come back a star." Irresistible stuff like that—and the marvelous old tunes of Harry Warren and Al Dubin—get the audience so drunk on memories

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that they even start applauding the strobe lights. Not too long ago, in a somewhat tougher age, kitsch of this kind was considered more appropriate for satire. My own nostalgia extends back to a sketch on *Your Show of Shows* called *92nd Street* ("where for every broken window there's a broken heart"), when Sid Caesar sent Imogene Coca out on stage to replace the backer's girlfriend (a female giant with a deep bass voice), and watched as Coca's quavering soprano knocked out everybody in the theater, including the janitor, the ushers, and the company dog (who inclined an ear toward the stage like the trademark for His Master's Voice).

Though it permits a little camp, the current version rarely satirizes its source material, which is fair enough considering how much money it is making off it. *42nd Street* comes on, rather, like an affectionate historical re-creation, right down to wry references to the astronomical price of theater tickets ("They're paying $4.40 a seat out there!") and the names on the marquees that light up at the end of the evening, featuring such contemporary hits as *Alien Corn* (starring Katherine Cornell), *Mary Queen of Scots* (starring Helen Hayes), *As Thousands Cheer*, and *Threepenny Opera*. Apart from the Brecht-Weill piece (a mute, inglorious flop when it first appeared), this Broadway honor list is hardly distinguished by very impressive plays, but it does suggest that, at least in aspiration, available acting talent, and sheer number of productions, the street was considerably more lively 50 years ago than it is today. It may be, as Julian Marsh gushes elegiacally to his new young star (right before warbling "The Lullaby of Broadway" into her ear), that the phrase "musical comedy" constitutes "the most glorious words in the English language," but quite a few other felicitous words have disappeared from the Broadway vocabulary in the period between the time of the action and the date of the revival.

It is as a tribute to the old musicals, however, that *42nd Street* finds its energy. There are Busby Berkeley reproductions, choral tapdances on a bunch of silver dollars, a torch song delivered by the soubrette (Tammy Grimes) to her own shadow, soft-edge Art Deco sets where even the mirrors have voluptuous curves, and an acting style (anachronistically amplified) which delivers everything directly to the audience, even that obligatory final moment when the producer, having achieved his hit, is left solitary on stage, wistfully contemplating the darkened lights of Broadway. On opening night, we are told, the real producer, David Merrick, came on stage to announce that the show's director, Gower Champion, had died that very afternoon—thus laying the mythical groundwork for the remake of the remake. *42nd Street* is the kind of simple entertainment that *Oklahoma* was supposed to have forever laid to earth; in fact, it reminds me of that glitzy musical we see beginning during the curtain call of *A Chorus Line*. It is not of our time—which may be the ultimate explanation of its enormous appeal.

Despite my strictures, the American remake at the Winter Garden is unquestionably alive. The Greek revival at Circle in the Square, on the other hand, needs mouth-to-mouth resuscitation. One of the most vital plays in the classical literature, Euripides's *Bacchae* is currently lying on the stage like a beached blowfish, gasping for air, and the fault lies almost exclusively with its director. Perhaps because Michael Cacoyannis has previously done Greek tragedies for this company (*The Trojan Women* and *Iphigenia in Aulis*)—as well as occasional movie versions of Greek tragedy usually featuring lots of women in black, writhing and moaning against craggy Aegean landscapes—he is invariably hired whenever there is a project requiring choral movement and Mediterranean emotions. But as his Broadway production of John Whiting's *The Devils* demonstrated some years back, what he invariably brings in is a perfectly manicured corpse, whose postmortem twitches and spasms are not convincing evidence of life.

What makes this director's productions theatrically enervating is that they are so full of nervous animation and so empty of authentic energy. Cacoyannis seems relentlessly devoted to celebrating human instinct (*vide* his movie of *Zorba the Greek*), but his concept of animal sensuality is never much more than an idea. Like Tennessee Williams, Cacoyannis assumes that peasants are burning with earthy passion, which usually translates into actors who work close to the ground, shrieking and clutching themselves. The irony is that his actors are invariably coached into every gesture and line reading, so that the very spontaneity that Cacoyannis wishes to champion gets dammed up in his direction. *Bacchae*, being concerned with the introduction of a new ecstatic religion into an uptight Theban culture, is particularly vulnerable to interpreters afflicted with what D. H. Lawrence called "sex in the head." It is the play that Richard Schechner, in the 1960s, treated

BRIGHT SUN AFTER HEAVY SNOW

A ledge of ice slides from the eaves,
piercing the crusted drift below. Astonishing
how even a little violence
eases the mind.

In this extreme state of light
everything seems flawed: the streaked
pane, the forced bulbs on the sill
that refuse to bloom . . . a wad of dust
rolls like a desert weed
over the drafty floor.

Again I recall a neighbor's
small affront—it rises in my mind
like the huge banks of snow along the road:
the plow, passing up and down all day,
pushes them higher and higher. . . .

The shadow of smoke rising from the chimney
moves abruptly over the yard.
The clothesline rises in the wind. One
clothespin is left, solitary as a finger;
it, too, rises and falls.

Jane Kenyon

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as a feelie grope-in (*Dionysus in 69*), and that probably inspired The Living Theater's several assaults on the sensibilities of the spectators, particularly *Paradise Now*.

To this, Cacoyannis adds a fashionable twist, treating *Bacchae* as an argument for women's lib—an interpretation which would have amused Aristophanes, whose comedies depicted Euripides being chased around Athens by infuriated women. "From now on," says Agave, having yanked her son's head off his shoulders, thinking him a lion, "no more weaving at the loom. I am meant for braver things." One can assume the Stepford wives of Thebes have now learned some interesting alternatives to housework and childbearing.

This translation, which the director has written himself despite the existence of a brilliant rendering by William Arrowsmith, is composed of metaphors that seem to have been mixed in a blender, when it is not imitating the diction of Marilyn Monroe. "Dionysus, we find you here, flowing like molten lava under the wounds of the earth," moans the Chorus of Asiatic Women, after uttering such phrases as "It is then a girl like me knows happiness" (well, perhaps Marilyn would have said "A girl like I"). Irene Papas, moreover, playing Agave with metronomic insistence, speaks her lines as if they had not quite emerged yet from the classical Greek. ("My seesters," she says to the chorus, waving her gory package in their faces, "Ees hit not—galorious?"). The inadequacies of Cacoyannis's casting have already been remarked upon by the critics. Dionysus is played by a good-looking youth with a head of blond curls, a nice pair of legs, and little else, while the actor playing Pentheus would be more appropriately cast as the rhythm guitarist in a punk rock movie. Philip Bosco alone seems to have escaped unscathed from the general condemnation, but I suspect the praise for his stiff characterization is the result of the physical and vocal resemblances he bears to certain well-known English stage stars—resemblances which usually manage to persuade the critics they are seeing a fine performance when they are only being reminded of one. Cacoyannis has elected to suggest the Eastern exoticism of the Chorus by casting them largely with non-white actresses (including one Oriental and five black women), who writhe, gyrate, and gurgle in a manner interesting only when a portion of their

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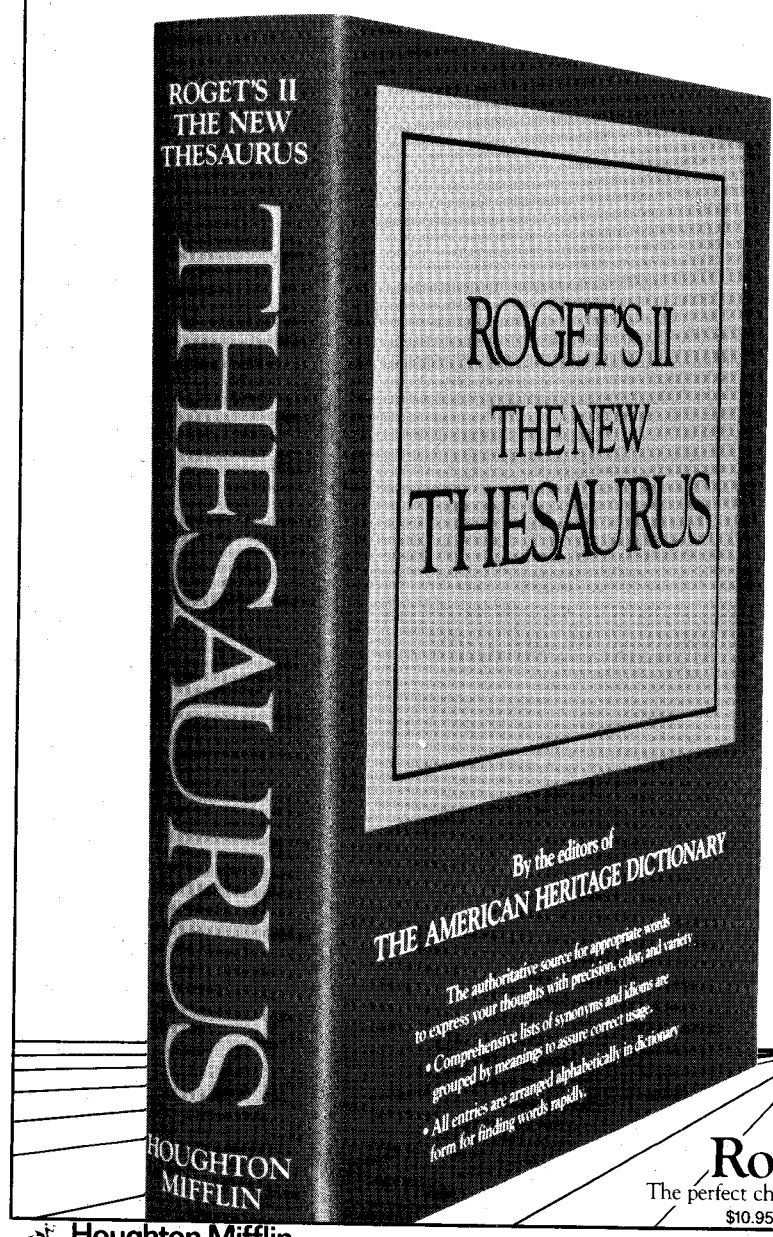
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upper anatomy threatens to escape from their loose-fitting costumes. My section of the theater was engaged in some lively betting about which of the women was next going to start stuffing an exposed breast inside her tunic.

The play, in short, has been not revived so much as embalmed, so the production is inevitably starting up all those old, tiresome arguments over whether Greek tragedy is relevant to our time. Of course it is. What is not relevant is this kind of approach. Have we already forgotten Serban's *Fragments of a Trilogy* which reached out across the centuries to Euripides, not through forced topical references, not through finishing-school choral exercises, but through stunning poetic and visual metaphors? Those—and universal emotions—are what keep such works almost as timeless as our latest musical hits.

John Canaday on art

Photography's Birthright: the Critic Recants

In the question and answer period following a lecture not long ago, a member of the audience asked me if I ever changed my mind about anything. The answer is yes I do, not only frequently, but back and forth as well. It is sometimes a pleasure to eat your own words, and the photographs by Alex Gotfryd in a new book on Egypt (*Egypt: The Eternal Smile, Reflections on a Journey*; Doubleday) are just now affording me a banquet, largely on the basis of a pair of articles that appeared in this magazine two years ago.

My long engagement with photography, as a passionate amateur, began at the age of about 12. Equipped with a Brownie 2-A box camera, I became infected with artistic ideas running to soft-focus portraits of my parents—not easy, since the only way to get a soft focus with a Brownie was to jiggle it—glamour poses of my eight-year-old sister inspired by Alfred Cheney Johnson's studies of such Ziegfeld beauties as Gladys Glad and Mae Murray. The virus subsided during adolescence, and a happy encounter with Paul Strand in my late teens set me on course with the idea that the photographer's job is to serve undoctored subject matter rather than to put subjects into service as raw material for aesthetic invention and romantic exaggeration.

The articles in *TNR* in August 1978 expounded that conviction and were entitled, to make the point doubly clear, "Polluted Birthright: I" and "Polluted Birthright: II," the first dealing with a wonderful unpolluted Asia House exhibition of 19th-century photographs of Imperial China in which the photographer's only goal was to capture objective records of specific times and places, and the second with a highly polluted exhibition of current photographic modes at the Museum of Modern Art called "Mirrors and Windows," purportedly dealing with photography in its opposing aspects as a window—a straightforward record of what confronts the lens—or as a mirror in which the photographer looks at himself. As it turned out, the exhibition was all mirrors, with the presence of the photographer intrusive everywhere, polluting, as I said, "the only pictorial medium the world has ever seen that can be free from personal judgments and responses." Throughout the show the photographers came first, their subjects second.

"This kind of personalism," I wrote,

> is, of course, at the very heart of painting and makes it the glorious art that it is. But painting can approach only to the border of something that photography alone can achieve, which is total objectivity in a permanent record of transient fact—photography's lost birthright. Any interpretive or aesthetic manipulation of the facts that confront the lens violates this unique objectivity, but we have become so accustomed to the idea that the photographer's job is precisely to manipulate his material that we can hardly conceive of his operating otherwise.

My somewhat intemperate conclusion was that "a photograph is good to the degree that it fulfills a documentary function, and debased to the degree that this function is sacrificed to arbitrary aesthetic or interpretive values." Before recanting, let me insist that the photographs of Paul Strand, Ansel Adams, Cartier-Bresson, Berenice Abbott, and even Diane Arbus are among those that come within my definition of documents, their interpretive qualities being a matter of selection and emphasis rather than distortion. Different thing altogether.

My addiction to documentary values was so strong that I belabored it in reviewing a book of photographs of Egyptian monuments by, I think, Elliot Elisofon, pointing out that the shadows in the otherwise sharp, clear, and acutely detailed pictures were solid black—something that just doesn't happen to shadows in Egypt. The raw sunlight reflected and re-reflected from earth, sand, and stone illuminates shadows with such strength that forms and textures are as clearly revealed there as in full light, although in a somewhat lower key. My objections must have been forceful, for the author wrote me a forceful letter of objection in turn, one of only two that I can remember having received following an unfavorable notice.

But Elisofon's photographs were at least in black and white. It has been my contention that color photography, except when valuable in pictures of birds, animals, flowers, exotic peoples, minerals, and the like, is a liar, producing automatic deformities (skies too blue, reds too red) and ruling out harmonious selectivity that is no problem in black and white. I am still essentially anti-color and pro-documentary, but what can you do in the face of Mr. Gotfryd's never-never Egypt? Here are pictures that, by the dicta I have held to, reach the nadir of debasement, but by a reverse view, which their beauty imposes, attain something like an apogee of romantic vision in which hardly a single visual fact is allowed to speak for itself.

His Egypt is rid not only of flies and tourists and Western dress, but very nearly of natural light. Egypt's merciless white blaze is turned either deep golden or blood red, lights where people and sculptures loom up half-revealed from great fields of velvety black. (Even more startling, the Nile sometimes becomes the Seine of the Impressionists, cool and gentle, flowing between hazy banks of spring verdure.) Mr. Gotfryd invents, rather than reveals, an Egypt that lies beneath the flat brilliance, the hard forms, the heat, and the stubborn resistance of ancient monuments to compromise with the passage of centuries. I kept thinking from photograph to photograph how the 19th-century

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French Romantics would have loved these pictures—Lamartine, Alfred de Vigny, the Chateaubriand of *Atala*, and Delacroix, who could have found in this serene Orientalism a counterpoint to the excitement that reduced him to near-delirium when he visited Morocco.

At the moment, not having read the text (with apologies to Allen Drury, who wrote it), I can find no reason for the subtitle, "The Eternal Smile." But from samplings of Mr. Drury's "Reflections on a Journey" (the sub-subtitle), I would guess that the text is less romanticized than the pictures, which should make a good combination. I am willing to trust Mr. Drury's well-known skill as a writer and reporter, and his respect for Egyptian archaeology as indicated by his dedication to the late James H. Breasted, the pioneer Egyptologist, in recommending this book enthusiastically. I could do so, truth is, on the score of the photographs alone.

Lyndon: An Oral Biography by Merle Miller

(G. P. Putnam's Sons; $17.95)

The question is where, if anywhere, Lyndon Baines Johnson belongs in the pantheon of progessivism. Some would exclude him completely. Others would assign him an empty pedestal or at most a defaced bust and withered laurels. A few still find a secure place for him. He seems at present more likely to wind up in the basement reserved for latter-day populists of the south and west—populists manqué—beginning with Bryan and continuing through Truman. No consensus appears likely to emerge very soon.

Take LBJ at his crest, however, and there were few if any who could match his claims. That was the Lyndon of the civil rights movement, the war on poverty, and the "Great Society" crusade. It has become fashionable in the current reactionism to deprecate his record as "throwing money at problems." Granting that some of Johnson's claims were exaggerated, Professor John M. Blum in his comparative study, *The Progressive Presidents*, nevertheless concludes that Johnson "produced impressive results" and declares that, "His record in 1965-66 rivaled those of Wilson in 1913-14 and Roosevelt in 1935."

That record, after all, included the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964. It included the Education Act of 1965 and the Voting Act of 1965—"the goddamdest toughest voting rights act" ever written were the president's instructions. In the name of the Great Society there followed a flood of measures and appropriations to advance the causes of public health, child care, job training, low-cost housing, and slum clearance, to endow the arts and humanities, to improve the environment, to assist schools, students, libraries, colleges, and universities. Back of those triumphs lay his landslide victory of 1964 carrying 44 states, 60 percent of the popular vote, and strong majorities in both houses of Congress. For a few magic months he had public opinion with him. And more important for the Johnsonian ego and human predicament, he felt he commanded public respect, admiration, even gratitude, affection, love.

Then followed swiftly the sad falling off, the sudden end of the honeymoon, the mounting suspicions, the growing resentment, the hostility, and eventually mutinous outrage. The slums exploded in the summer and the campuses took over each fall. It seemed that the greatest bitterness often came from those most favored by administration largesse—especially the universities and the intellectuals. As the most unpopular war in our history wore on and escalated, the president became increasingly isolated and wound up almost a prisoner in the White House, fearful of attending the national nominating convention of his own party.

To explain the triumph and the tragedy in all that would be to require too much of a biography—in fact much more than a biography, even though biographical explanations are fundamental. For at the center of Lyndon Johnson's own psychodrama was the situation in which the presidency entrapped him and the regional and personal background he brought to the office. Both situation and background recall the plight of the other President Johnson, but the analogy is not very helpful. Johnson II became president when his predecessor was murdered in his presence, virtually in his own backyard, and the martyrdom was reenacted in every living room in the country. The victim was quickly canonized, his failings and blunders were forgotten or forgiven, and his administration was magically idealized by the myth of Camelot.

Into his place Fate thrust the boy from the Pedernalis, alumnus of Southwest Texas State Teachers College, self-made from the start, and the start was very low—gut hungry, penny-pinching, hardscrabble. How could he possibly measure up to his proclaimed goal of "continuity" with this legendary princeling of the newly rich Boston-Irish-Harvard elite and the Camelot courtiers who stayed on in Cabinet and staff? And how could he ever overcome the additional burden of suspicion, disdain, and contempt that he profoundly

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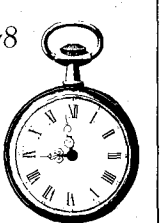

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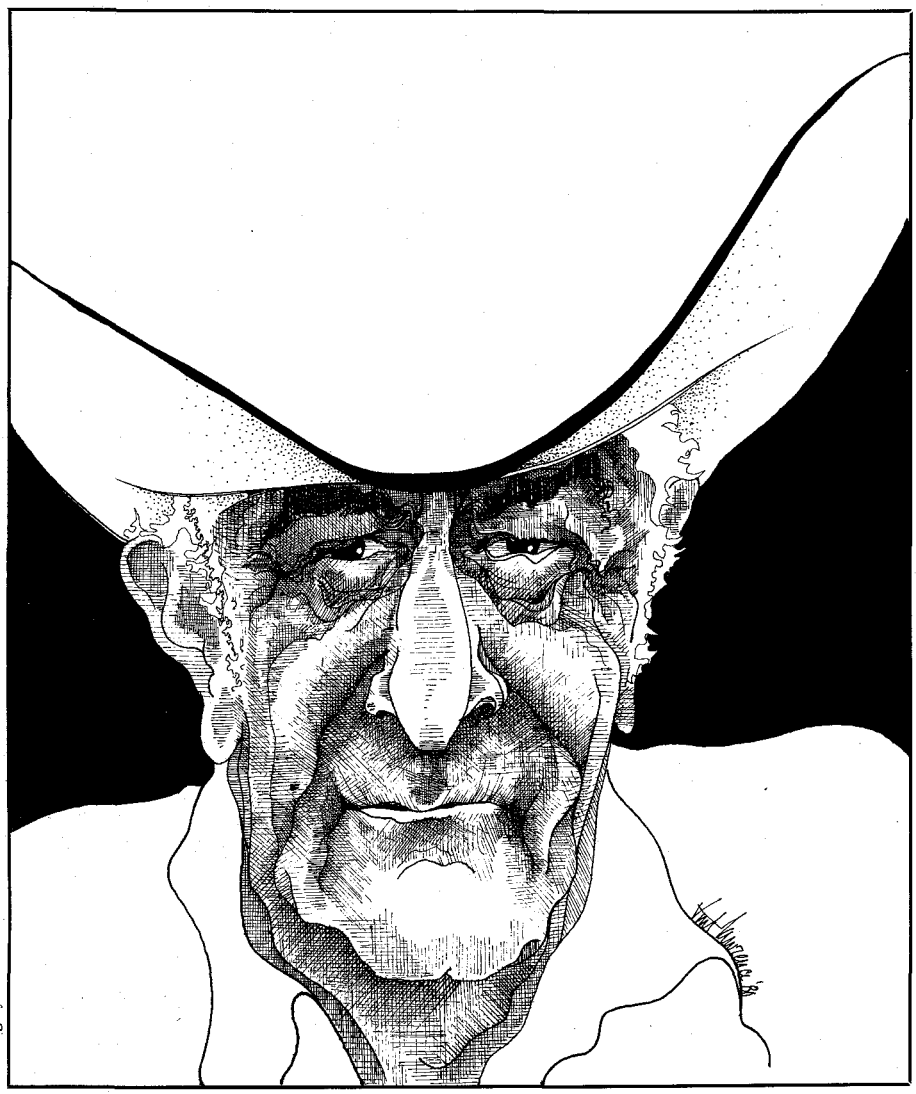

drawing by Vint Lawrence

believed handicapped every southerner who aspired to national leadership? Could it be done perhaps by overdoing it, by outdoing the model? If JFK was a liberal, might not LBJ be a superliberal? If a patriot, why not a superpatriot? He would show them a thing or two.

The superliberal part came naturally to him, not only as an apostle of FDR, but as a southerner of the hardscrabble tradition to which the great majority of his Depression generation belonged. And by superb timing and relentless pressure he even swept them along for elemental black rights, perhaps the only politician who could have ever brought that off. He did "overcome"—by overdoing. "There could be no doubt about it," said John Kenneth Galbraith, "Johnson was very much more a part of the liberal instinct of the times than John F. Kennedy was," and besides he had "a greater sense of what he could get away with and what he could do on the Hill."

No, it was not as superliberal but as superpatriot that Johnson stumbled and fell. And there, like his (and Kennedy's) secretary of state, Dean Rusk, he did make a significant departure from his regional heritage. Somewhere along the line, perhaps in World War II, he adopted the essentially Yankee credo of American invincibility and American omnipotence. Challenged once at a Cabinet meeting about the practicality of a proposal of his, he sprang from his chair and leaned halfway across the table shouting, "There is nothing this country can't do. Remember that." It followed that both guns and butter were in endless supply. "This nation is mighty enough," he declared in his State of the Union address of 1966, "its society is healthy enough, its people are strong enough, to pursue our goals in the rest of the world while still building a Great Society here at home." He set no limits to "our goals in the rest of the world," but he was talking at the time about Vietnam. America could police the world and offer it a moral example at the same time. These were not notions that Johnson picked up on the banks of the Pedernalis, or Rusk along the Chattahoochee.

Merle Miller's biography of Lyndon Johnson is more narrative and anecdotal than it is analytical. He shuns psychoanalytical profundities and does not dip very deeply into historical origins and continuities. We look in vain, for example, for the impact of the mighty populist upheaval in Texas on Johnson and his forebears. We are left to wonder about the implications of Lyndon's statement that "I'm a Texan and a southerner," and how much he denied the latter identity. And there are psychological teasers that challenge exploration. In spite of all that, there is probably more to be learned about the awesome human and political phenomenon of LBJ from this book than from any other.

It would be fair, I think, to call it without disparaging intent a friendly biography. That does not mean a slighting of the seamy, the grotesque, the vulgar and obscene, the ruthless, the devious, and the mean in the man. They are all there in full measure and the existing lore is enriched as never before. The following scene in the president's bedroom is described by an eyewitness:

> I think Lynda Bird was in there, and Mrs. Johnson, and Marie Fehmer was taking dictation. The president was lying on his side in his bed and facing the group. There was a nurse on the other side, the three television sets were all going, and he was going snap, snap, snap. He's batting dictation to Marie, he's switching the channels, he's yelling at Bill [Moyers] —and I think there were others there, someone from one of the networks and another from the White House staff—and he's yelling at them too. And everybody in this fairly large group was acting normal as all get out.

The president was having an enema.

To General De Gaulle is attributed one of the boldest generalizations on national character inspired by Johnson. "Kennedy was a mask on the face of America," he said, "while Lyndon Johnson *was* America." According to Hubert Humphrey,

> Johnson was constantly compared to Kennedy, and that was like comparing a heavyweight boxer to a ballet dancer. . . . He'd come on just like a tidal wave sweeping all over the place. He went through walls. He'd come through a door, and he'd take the whole room over. Just like that. Everything. . . . There was nothing delicate about him. He was not a ballet dancer. He was a downfield blocker and a running fullback *all the time.*

He was the same Lyndon abroad. On one tour of Asiatic and Pacific countries he took along a plane loaded with

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"something like two hundred busts of himself," plastic ones, some "white marblish" and others "bronze-looking" to present to heads of state and other dignitaries he encountered. Of another diplomatic encounter he reported, "I've told those Greek bastards to lay off that sonofabitch, whoever he is"—Andreas Papandreou, in this case, sentenced to be shot the next day.

The note of defensiveness, when it appears, is usually in connection with a Kennedy comparison. Miller dismisses as "part of myth of Camelot" the story "that John F. Kennedy intended to withdraw from Vietnam after he had won the 1964 election." He marshals some impressive testimony in support of that view. The evidence suggests that no withdrawal was contemplated and escalation was well on the way before Johnson succeeded to office. For the most part, the biographer succeeds in keeping above the level of polemics and partisanship.

Finally, a word about "oral biography." Oral testimony or evidence is subject to the same discount as written documents. Perhaps even more, since it usually relies on memory alone. Few writers depend on oral testimony exclusively. They use in addition the traditional written sources—diaries, letters, official documents, newspapers, and all the rest. Most of the oral testimony is reduced to written form before the historian uses it. Merle Miller made use of more than 500 oral sources, 180 of them personal interviews conducted by him or his assistants. The main advantage is the opportunity to ask questions of the interviewee that cannot be asked of the document. The main risk is that the questions suggest the answers desired. Miller's use of such material indicates some awareness of the risks. And he may have a point in saying that, "It's a particularly good way of dealing with someone like Lyndon Johnson."

C. Vann Woodward

C. Vann Woodward is professor of history emeritus at Yale University.

The Collected Stories of Eudora Welty

(Harcourt Brace Jovanovich; $17.50)

American letters may still lack a novelist whose life work matches in weight the achievement of Dickens or Tolstoy, but our 20th-century masters of the short story bow to no one for for stylistic elegance or emotional penetration. The past decade has brought in stout collections from three of the best—Flannery O'Connor, John Cheever, Paul Bowles—and of the certified living masters of the form, only Eudora Welty has resisted collection (though all but two of the stories were continuously available in separate volumes). A change of publisher stymied the project for several years, but finally here they are—41 stories, the entire contents of her four individual collections plus two stories previously uncollected.

The best news is the availability, in a single package, of stories as good in themselves and as influential on the aspirations of other stories as any since Hemingway's. Second best—a quick check indicates that Welty has avoided the worst temptation of collectors, the revision of old work in hindsight. Thus some of the early stories are still clouded by a compulsively metaphoric prose (virtually everything is compared to, equated with, some other thing). And even an untypically hollow story like "The Purple Hat" or a misfire like "A Visit of Charity" has been perpetuated with the successes. Far better though to have them in the forms of their initial occurrence than obscured by a forged technical gloss or uselessly suppressed.

Only one sizable question may be asked. Would it have been better to break up the sequence of the original volumes and print the stories in order of composition (with an exception for *The Golden Apples*, whose stories are connected)? Such an arrangement would at least have made possible the inclusion of a few never-collected early stories as viable as two or three now canonized, and it would have clarified the reader's legitimate search for evolving themes and repetitions in a writer whose concerns have dived and surfaced in unusually patient cycles. But Welty presumably chose in favor of her first, chiefly musical placement; and she of all contemporary writers since Auden has spoken out most sternly against the bald historical-biographical curiosity of readers and critics. In any case, the original appearances of the components of the four volumes were closely grouped. Those in *A Curtain of Green* were published in magazines from 1936 to 1941, those in *The Wide Net* from 1941 to 1943, *The Golden Apples* from 1947 to 1949, *The Bride of the Innisfallen* from 1949 to 1954, and the two latest stories in 1963 and 1966. (Each of these volumes was followed by a novel—*The Robber Bridegroom* in 1942, *Delta Wedding* in 1946, *The Ponder Heart* in 1954, and the two late stories by *Losing Battles* in 1970 and *The Optimist's Daughter* in 1972.)

A long performance then and one which, though it has never lacked praise and devoted readers, has presented critics with the kind of fearless emotional intensity, the fixed attention to daily life, and the technical audacity that have mercilessly revealed the poverty of scholastic critical methods. In the 1940s the lucid early stories and *Delta Wedding* were automatically accused of gothicism and indifference to the plight of southern blacks. The connected

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stories of *The Golden Apples* set off a dismal and apparently endless hunt for mythological underpinning (a curse that the stories innocently brought on themselves). The internalized experiments of the long stories of the 1950s met with general bafflement. Though prizes descended and though a handful of stories were rushed into most anthologies while Welty fans round the land stood ready to burst into recitations from "Petrified Man" or "A Shower of Gold," it was only with Ruth Vande Kieft's discerning *Eudora Welty* in 1962 that the size of the achievement began to be acknowledged and mapped—the size and the peculiar pitfalls of the stories as objects for contemplation, guides to action.

The difficulties are big, both of matter and of manner. As the center of critical power shifted in the 1950s from the south to the northeast, a vestigial resistance to southern fiction quickly enlarged and hardened. The south had had too long an inning as Literary Central; its writers were obsessed with the ruling classes of a society rotten with greed and racist inhumanity (as though Tolstoy, Flaubert, or Bellow had more exemplary subjects). Thus Welty's Christian white ladies and their ineffectual mates, her resigned fieldhands and maids, her garrulous white trash, were obstacles for a high proportion of trained readers. And no native southern critics of distinction rose in succession to Ransom, Tate, and Warren to mediate such work to the nation. But even more daunting than the unabashed southern grounding of the work was the statement at its center, a quiet reiterated statement that declared two polar yet indissoluble things. Most disturbing of all, the statement proved itself by locating characters and actions of recognizable solidity and pursuing them with a gaze that occasionally seemed serpentine in its steadiness—or angelic (as in angel of judgment). On first acquaintance one might be tempted to link the Welty of the stories with an apparent progenitor and paraphrase the statement by quoting D. H. Lawrence's essay on Poe—"A ghastly disease love. Poe telling us of his disease: trying to make his disease fair and attractive. Even succeeding."

If we substitute *Homo sapiens* for Poe we do have a crucial beam for the scaffolding of any of Welty's stories. The fact was realized in other terms in Robert Penn Warren's important early essay, "The Love and the Separateness in Miss Welty." For the stories from first to last do say this clearly: "Human creatures are compelled to seek one another in the hope of forming permanent bonds of mutual service, not primarily from an instinct to continue the species" (children are only minor players in her cast), "but from a profound hunger, mysterious in cause, for individual gift and receipt of mutual care." ("Tenderness" is Welty's most sacred word.) "So intense is the hunger however that, more often than not, it achieves no more than its own frustration—the consumption and obliteration of one or both of the mates." (The words "bitter" and "shriek" occur as frequently, and weightily, as "tenderness.")

photo of Eudora Welty by Richard O. Moore

To that extent, Poe or even Strindberg is a truer ancestor to the stories than Virginia Woolf or E. M. Forster, who have often been mentioned. But such whimsical genealogies are of interest only to literary historians. They give little help to a reader whose aim is the enjoyment of and kinetic response to fiction that is so obviously the report of a particular pair of eyes on a particular place. For the dense matrix of observed life—mineral, bestial, human—which surrounds Welty's statement of the doomed circularity of love is the source of her originality, the flavor which quickly distinguishes a stretch of her prose from any other writer's.

> She knew that now at the river, where she had been before on moonlit nights in autumn, drunken and sleepless, mist lay on the water and filled the trees, and from the eyes to the moon would be a cone, a long silent horn, of white light. It was a connection visible as the hair is in air, between the self and the moon, to make the self feel the child, a daughter far, far back. Then the water, warmer than the night air or the self that might be suddenly cold, like any other arms, took the body under too, running without visibility into the mouth. As she would drift in the river, too alert, too insolent in her heart in those days, the mist might thin momentarily and brilliant jewel eyes would look out from the water-line and the bank. Sometimes in the weeds a lightning bug would lighten, on and off, on and off, for as long in the night as she was there to see.
>
> Out in the yard, in the coupe, in the frayed velour pocket next to the pistol was her cache of cigarettes. She climbed inside and shielding the matchlight, from habit, began to smoke cigarettes. All around her the dogs were barking. ["The Wanderers"]

Her monitoring senses record two main strands of data—the self-sufficient splendor of the natural world (in a number of American and European places) and the enciphered poetry of human thought and speech which rises, sometimes through fits of laughter, to moments of eloquently plain truth-telling. The first-written of the stories provides a pure example. In "Death of a Traveling Salesman," the lost itinerant shoe-salesman comes suddenly to understand the fertile union of a couple in whose home he has harbored after an automobile accident.

> Bowman could not speak. He was shocked with knowing what was really in this house. A marriage, a fruitful marriage. That simple thing. Anyone could have had that.
>
> Somehow he felt unable to be indignant or protest, although some sort of joke had certainly been played upon him. There was nothing remote or mysterious here—only something private.

Such yearning for love is found in numerous other mouths in the stories, as character after character (male and female indifferently) reaches the boundary of illusion. But the second half of their repeated discovery is almost never spoken, by character or author. Only at the solitary ends of fated action do the characters perceive an inexorably closing circle. Having earned his vision, the salesman flees the scene of care and continuance and dies of heart failure, literally felled by his knowledge. Virgie Rainey at the end of "The Wanderers" is driven from her home and all she has known by the collapse of her dream of transcending love; and her first stopping place—perhaps her final destination—is a heightened awareness of the gorgeous nonhuman world that coils round our species (the only species, so

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far as we know, capable of contemplating that world). The casual pair who nearly connect in "No Place for You, My Love" are actually prevented by a watchful and judging world, the sunstruck land below New Orleans.

> At length he stopped the car again, and this time he put his arm under her shoulders and kissed her—not knowing ever whether gently or harshly. It was the loss of that distinction that told him this was now. Then their faces touched unkissing, unmoving, dark, for a length of time. The heat came inside the car and wrapped them still, and the mosquitoes had begun to coat their arms and even their eyelids.
>
> Later, crossing a large open distance, he saw at the same time two fires. He had the feeling that they had been riding for a long time across a face—great, wide, and upturned. In its eyes and open mouth were those fires they had had glimpses of, where the cattle had drawn together: a face, a head, far down here in the South—south of South, below it. A whole giant body sprawled downward then, on and on, always, constant as a constellation or an angel. Flaming and perhaps falling, he thought.

Similar ambush awaits the characters of her novels, though the greater length of a novel generally results in a more ambiguous, if not truer, statement. The stories preserve the naked cry—as sane, inevitable, and unanswerable as the evening call of a solitary beast from the edge of a wood.

No wonder that admirers of Welty's fiction have concentrated most of their scrutiny and affection on comic stories like "Why I Live at the P.O." or the numerous others that richly summon atmospheres of serene nature and the warm conglomerations of family life—weddings, funerals, reunions. The choice has been instinctive, a normal reflex of narrative hunger (which craves consolation, with small side-orders of fright or sadistic witness).

The favorites are certainly worthy. In previous American fiction, only Mark Twain displays as skillfully poised a comic gift, poised on the razor that divides compassion and savagery (Faulkner's comedy is oddly gentler). Welty's power over loving and tussling groups of kin gathered on magnetized family ground is matched only by the 19th-century Russians, as is her courage for the plain declaration of loyalty and duty. A story like "A Worn Path" is unimaginable in any hands but hers or Chekhov's (and it is only illustrative of my point that this uncomplicated tale of duty has evoked a blizzard of nutty mytho-symbolist explications). And her effortless entry into masculine minds as various as the traveling salesman, the younger salesman in "The Hitch-Hikers," the young husband of "The Wide Net," the black jazz-pianist of "Powerhouse," and the majestically thoughtless King McClain of *The Golden Apples* is a sustaining assurance (in the presently gory gender wars) that the sexes can occasionally comprehend and serve one another if they choose to.

But such selective attention—and the popular anthologies have been as monotonous as her admirers—has resulted in a partial, even distorted, sense of Welty as the mild, sonorous, "affirmative" kind of artist whom America loves to clasp to its bosom and crush with belated honors (Robert Frost endured a similar reputation, but he had handmade it assiduously). It is one of the qualities of genius to provide wares for almost any brand of shopper—it has taken ages to wrestle Jane Austen from the chaste grip of the Janeites or Dickens from the port-and-Stilton set—

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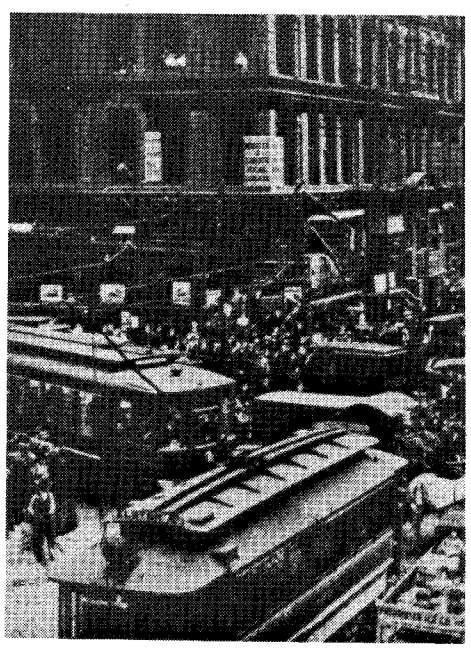

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and Welty's stories have, without calculation, stocked most departments. But such an embarrassment of choice endangers understanding.

One can hope then that this first display of the whole supply in a single place will encourage readers not only to sample the random colors and harmonies of 20-odd masterpieces but to read all the stories in the roughly chronological order of their arrangement. I've already suggested the chief discovery or rediscovery to be made—a contemporary American genius of range as well as depth.

The breadth of Welty's offering is finally most visible not in the variety of types—farce, satire, horror, lyric, pastoral, mystery—but in the clarity and solidity and absolute honesty of a lifetime's vision. That it's a Janus-faced or Argus-eyed vision, I've also suggested —even even at times a Gorgon stare. Yet its findings are not dealt out as one more of the decks of contradictory and generally appalling polaroids so prevalent in our fiction and verse. A slow perusal here—say a story a night for six weeks—will not fail to confirm a granite core in every tale: as complete and unassailable an image of human relations as any in our art, tragic of necessity but also comic (even the latest story, a chilling impersonation of the white assassin of a black civil rights leader, jokes to its end). As real a gift in our legacy as any broad river or all our lost battles.

Reynolds Price

Reynolds Price's most recent novel is *The Surface of Earth* (Atheneum). A new novel, *The Source of Light*, will be published by Atheneum in the spring.

Criticism in the Wilderness: the Study of Literature Today by Geoffrey H. Hartman

(Yale University Press; $18)

Insofar as I could discern a thesis in this diffuse book, I took it to go something like this: Anglo-American literary studies have come to be dominated by a dull and demeaning ideal of "practical" criticism. For a number of reasons, critics have narrowed their aims: the pressure for university literature courses to fulfill the "service" function of introducing literary texts to inexperienced students; the pressure on professors to publish, often resulting in mechanical "explications" which nobody needs; the specialization of departments, which cuts literary studies off from sister disciplines such as history, philosophy, and theology. For these and other causes, the dry, utilitarian spirit of Locke has triumphed over the more daring, speculative spirit of Hegel, Nietzsche, and Heidegger. A prime expression of this practical bias of literary studies is the tendency to regard criticism as an austere science, holding itself pure of any imputation of literary character lest it compromise its objective authority. This bias has made Anglo-American professors suspicious of the free-ranging inquiries of Continental philosophers and critics, particularly as pursued by recent avant-garde thinkers like Jacques Derrida. What, then, is to be done? Without abandoning the close analysis of concrete literary works, criticism, Hartman urges, must open itself to theoretical inquiry. It must overcome its fastidious insistence on purity and acknowledge its communality with literature, especially with literature's impulse to call all things into question, including the premises of literature and criticism themselves.

Hartman connects the narrowly utilitarian view of criticism and the "defensive partition of the critical and creative spirit" with a more pervasive fear of self-conscious thought. He has written frequently on this theme in culture and literature, as for example in his useful essay, "Romanticism and Anti-Self-Consciousness." His basic notions, indeed, would seem to be an extension of the ideas of Romantic philosophers such as Schiller and Hegel: since the dawn of the modern age our culture has been so overwhelmed by its sense of the multiplicity and complexity of experience and the plurality of possible points of view that it has come to see the fully conscious pursuit of knowledge as leading not to enlightenment but to skepticism and paralysis of the will. When Bacon equated knowledge with power, he was thinking of the kind of knowledge which was strictly organizable in the service of practical utility. From this point of view, self-knowledge, idealized since the Greeks, might seem a useless, Hamletish liability. Early Romantic philosophers like Kant, Schiller, and Hegel found ways to reconcile the advancing self-consciousness of humanity with the progress of civilization, but they recognized the possibility—which Nietzsche would eventually explore fully—that self-reflection leads to nihilism and to moral and social anarchy.

Unwilling to face up to these disturbing possibilities, timid spirits throw up defenses against self-consciousness and sometimes even against thinking itself, for these things are seen as threats to the healthy, orderly functioning of culture and personality. Such was Matthew Arnold's mood when he complained (in "The Scholar Gypsy") of "this strange disease of modern life,/ With its sick hurry, its divided aims,/its heads o'ertaxed. . . ." This anxiety is immeasurably increased and spread by the clutter of modern communications, the mass production and distribution of cultural objects (a theme Hartman has treated in the title essay of a previous book, *The Fate of Reading*). But Arnoldian retreat from the challenges of self-consciousness for Hartman amounts to a failure of nerve. One protects the intellectual life from its dangers, but only by draining it of vitality and relevance.

I have inferred the above summary rather than taken it directly from *Criticism in the Wilderness*, since Hartman does not choose to present his ideas in a linear fashion. Part of the problem is that this book is essentially a collection of disparate essays unconvincingly posing as "chapters" in a unified work. But I suspect the lack of linear exposition may itself be an attempt to make a point, to exemplify the "literary" conception of criticism that Hartman is recommending. Only the introduction and final chapter ("A Short History of Practical Criticism") yield incisive generalizations. The 265 pages between presumably justify inclusion as a series of show pieces demonstrating the proposed reunion of theory and explicative criticism. These pages contain rambling discussions of Carlyle, T. S. Eliot, Bloom,

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Benjamin, Frye, Kenneth Burke, Emerson, and Derrida, among others, not necessarily in that, or in any, order. There are also discussions of Emily Dickinson and American poetics—both said to be ridden by an American species of the quest for purity of language. And there are speculations about the psychology of the critic and the indeterminacy of textual meaning, two subjects Hartman believes we have been afraid to investigate lest the results undermine our confidence in our interpretations of literature. There is a good deal of talk about "repression" and implied exhortations not to be afraid of this or that. The notion that advanced criticism is resisted because it is "feared" is a trifle self-congratulatory, implying as it does that advanced critics are dangerous fellows indeed.

In treating his variety of topics, Hartman all but comes to the point of asserting something. Instead of arguments, one gets wry remarks, witticisms, puns, allusions, and quotations, lots of allusions and quotations. In order to make sense of this long section, one has to watch for repeating motifs—repression, purification, etc.—as one would in taking in *The Waste Land* or a Wagnerian opera. Sometimes one encounters a passage that sounds so much like thinking that one rereads it four or five times in search of the sense, but with limited success:

> To call for purity is to perpetuate a visionary disease instead of opting for purgation by using the peculiarly human tools called symbols, of which the 'verbal principle' is recognized even in religion by the term 'Logos.'
>
> [apropos of Nietzsche's *The Birth of Tragedy*] . . . is music not representation that has broken with representation, and that *like all art* is carried by the 'passion' of this break, or rather, of this breaking, since the break must be repeated, and yields the *form* of art itself as a function of that repetition? [italics Hartman's]

"Maybe," one would probably answer that last question, while excusing onself to get another drink. Possibly in defense of this kind of writing, Hartman observes that "no one would argue that all subjects can be made easy." This is true, but we tolerate difficulty when we judge the results to be both worth the trouble and producible in no more simple way. That is not clearly the case here.

More serious an impediment than out-and-out opacity, though, is Hartman's habit of taking essential definitions and explanations for granted, as if it can be safely assumed that the reader is already so familiar with them that he would be bored by having them spelled out. A small but typical example: "Hermeneutics," Hartman says, "has always inquired into the scandal of figurative language, when that was extraordinary or transgressive." What precisely "the scandal of figurative language" is is not stated, for hasn't every schoolboy by now read Paul de Man? Such allusive writing both flatters and intimidates the reader. He is credited with inside knowledge but made to feel anxious if he reflects that he may not have it. Hartman no doubt knows what he means, but his technique of non-definition—taken in itself—encourages bluffing. It leads to a familiar kind of pseudo-communication in which all parties pretend to know what is going on while none of them really does for sure.

Hartman's most sustained piece of analysis comes in an interesting section on Walter Benjamin. He shows how the repressed ghost of theology persistently erupts through the intended Marxist sociology. What limits the exercise is that whereas Benjamin aspires to be profound, Hartman is seemingly content to be clever. Here and in other chapters, Hartman surrounds his topics with a tone of sophisticated irony that forbids the crudity of making a commitment or even stating a proposition. Again, it is a case of criticism aiming to be literature—according to a certain conception of literature, it should be noted—by making itself resistant to paraphrase, by turning itself into a dramatic "process" of thought rather than a chain of reasonings leading to a conclusion, by seeking to "be" rather than "mean," and by ironizing out of existence anything that threatens to become a conviction. Highly up-to-date though such sophisticated self-cancellation may be, it echoes an older, genteel academic code of manners, which looked on all "serious" postures as unseemly and unbefitting a gentleman. One sometimes wonders if for all its celebrated ferocity and its self-proclaimed appetite for risk, recent avant-garde criticism is not decorously conservative at bottom. Hartman himself says, accurately, I think, that vanguard criticism, "whether in the form of radical art or advanced commentary, seeks to remove the naiveté of formalization rather than to challenge its necessity." In other words, you

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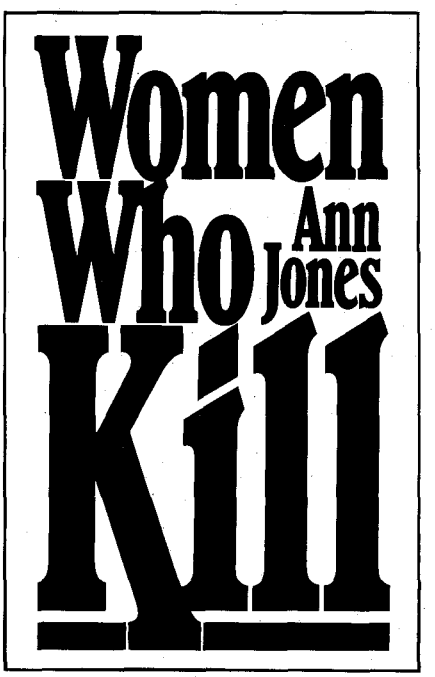

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can have your "formalization"—Hartmanese for conventions, forms of order, convictions, values—as long as you are careful to make clear you don't take it too seriously. You can even cling to a piously Arnoldian belief in the humanistic value of literature as long as you are ironic about it.

Some, of course, may protest that Hartman has domesticated and academicized the truly radical impulses of his Continental exemplars, that he has reduced French intransigence to New Haven wit. But this won't wash, I think. What Derrida's celebrated "deconstruction" of Western metaphysics adds up to, as Derrida himself emphasizes, is not that metaphysics has been discredited but that its conceptual underpinnings have been exposed as fictions. Once one acknowledges those fictions for what they are, one is licensed to embrace them—and Derrida often suggests we have little choice but to do so. The true thrust of deconstructive criticism, then, may have less to do with iconoclasm than with academic irony. We arrive at the apparent culmination of Hegel's idea of the self-conscious Spirit realizing itself through history: professors of literature struggling to avoid being thought naive. Is not this spectacle perhaps itself a ripe occasion for irony, or at least a few laughs?

Even if it is, we can learn something from the spectacle. The trouble with Hartman's view lies not, I think, in his conflation of the critical with the literary, or his wish to merge literature, philosophy, and history. He is right in thinking that the isolation and compartmentalization of these subjects has had much to do with impoverishing literary discussion in the last 20 years. The trouble lies rather in Hartman's conception of what is "literary," a conception that excludes the making of statements. One assumes Hartman is not incapable of consecutive argument, but that he has decided that if it's consecutive argument you want you should have gone into electrical engineering or zero-sum accounting. Despite his repeated emphasis on the need to put our concepts in question, one feels Hartman has never questioned this very common view of literature as the antithesis of and antidote to positive science. Reacting against the dominance of commercial and technological institutions, one defines the literary (and often the humanistic in general) as everything that science and technology are not, which is to say, as non-logical, non-conceptual, non-objective, non-verifiable, and not open to refutation. This slanders literature in the process of celebrating it.

In Hartman's case, this attitude produces an instructive contradiction. Although, as we have seen, Hartman wants criticism to overcome its defensive aversion to philosophy, his own conception of criticism (and perhaps of philosophy too) is so defensively anti-scientific as to cause him to purge his writing of assertion. He himself complains that we define literature as whatever is left over after subtracting everything else, yet he falls for another version of this negative dialectic. Aiming to inject a vital impurity into critical discourse and to ruffle complacency, Hartman ends up keeping his own discourse pure of anything anybody could argue with.

This contradiction is related to a second: Hartman seems both to want and not to want to address a general audience. Through much of the book, he speaks as if the "service" function of criticism, its role in the process of "socializing" students, is nothing more than an unwelcome inhibition on the critic. Yet Hartman ends his book with a vigorous call for the closing of the gap between highbrow literary studies and the lay public. In this, Hartman resembles one of those improbable rakes in old sentimental comedies who undergoes a fifth-act conversion to respectability. It is true that having lapsed embarrassingly into clarity in this section, Hartman feels obliged to apologize: "I am so unused to this open kind of rhetoric," he confides at one point, "that having written the above words I wish to cross them out." Instead of crossing them out, though, Hartman drives the point home:

> Unless we find some doors, revolving or not, that lead from the humanities into society, and unless some of our graduates go into other walks of life than teaching, or remain in touch with us even though they are in the nonacademic professions, the humanities are bound to become service departments to other divisions of the academy with more obvious and effective social outlets.

Hartman even goes so far as to suggest —and it is not a bad suggestion—that degrees in English and business should not be unthinkable. Earlier, Hartman had favorably cited the work of journalistic critics such as Van Wyck Brooks, Randolph Bourne, and Ludwig Lewisohn. All this shows an admirable impulse to free criticism from its domination by coteries and private jargons, but the impulse conflicts with the dominant tendency of the book. Truth-in-advertising regulations will have to be bent to accommodate the publisher's dust-jacket claim that *Criticism in the Wilderness* is "written throughout with a general intellectual audience in mind."

None of my objections should distract us from recognizing the justice and importance of many of Hartman's criticisms of established literary studies. I agree with him that criticism has been made monotonous by the mass production of explication for explication's sake; that important theoretical questions about meaning and interpretation posed by avant-garde critics have been ignored or relegated to specialists; that the severance of literary studies from history, philosophy, and theology is a disaster, as is the estrangement of all these studies from the larger public culture (save where they filter down in a debased, therapeutic form). I think Hartman exaggerates the Anglo-American indifference to Continental ideas; existentialism, for example, has had great vogue here and influenced the New Criticism and other schools. But Hartman does not have his eye on many of the central problems of his discipline, and it is no doubt significant that a scholar of his stature should now speak out about them. Still, insofar as Hartman's own work is proffered as a model, it submerges us deeper into the "wilderness" mentioned in his title rather than showing a way out. I doubt if

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anybody but those already committed to avant-garde literary criticism will be moved by Hartman to think better of it than before reading him. The curious inquirer will get a clearer sense of the implications and uses of the newer critical theories from Jonathan Culler's *Structuralist Poetics*, from Culler's more recent essays in defense of deconstruction, and from Stanley Fish's theoretical papers, collected in his forthcoming *Is There a Text in This Class?* He may want to argue with much these writers say, but it is one of their strengths that what they say can be argued with. What is finally disappointing about Hartman's book is not that it renders its subjects obscure but that it renders them inarguable.

Gerald Graff

Gerald Graff is professor of English at Northwestern University and the author of *Literature Against Itself: Literary Ideas in Modern Society* (University of Chicago Press). He is currently teaching at the University of California at Berkeley.

The National Interest and the Human Interest: An Analysis of US Foreign Policy by Robert C. Johansen

(Princeton University Press; $32.50)

A number of bumper stickers have appeared recently with the legend: "Say something good about America." It is an old Nixonian theme. The former president at the height of the Vietnam War used to divide the country between the patriots who supported his devious, hopeless strategy for extricating the nation from the Indochina adventure and all the others who were forever tearing down the country. Now faced with Tehran crowds seething with hatred for the United States, the kidnapping and murder of US ambassadors, and the growing derision of American policies emanating from many countries, the pressure for positive thinking about America is on the rise. Norman Podhoretz has recently written a small book which argues that the country's troubles are in considerable measure attributable to self-hating intellectuals who lack respect for American values and hence see the exercise of American power as "immoral." Strategists of the Committee on the Present Danger school see the country hobbled by the "failure of nerve" of a foreign policy elite that has absorbed too much of the "culture of appeasement." We should be more confident about ourselves. The spending of one trillion dollars on the military in the next five years, or more, if the proposed Reagan budgets are put into effect, is designed as much to boost our sagging confidence as it is to scare the Russians.

Robert Johansen's original and compelling study will give no comfort to those who believe that better self-advertisement is the key to a more effective foreign policy. Taking four cases—the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks, the 25-year economic aid to India, US-Chile relations with particular emphasis on human rights policy, and the negotiations for international control of marine pollution—he uses each to examine how a professed value of American foreign policy—peace, economic development, social justice, and ecological balance—actually fares in the implementation of foreign policy. One would not need a 517-page book to make the point that the US, like every other country, falls short of its pretentions, but it is the merit of Johansen's study that he takes seriously the benign intentions of American leaders and seeks to find out why it is becoming so hard to find something good to say about American foreign policy.

In his analysis he juxtaposes what he calls "world order values" and the US national interest as currently defined. Thus in the SALT negotiations the world order values professed are: to slow the arms race, to curtail arms expenditures, to lay the foundation for future arms reductions, and to reduce international tensions exacerbated by the arms race. He then goes on to show how and why the policies pursued undermined those objectives. In a careful study of the triple SALT negotiations—one with the Pentagon, another with Congress, and a third with the Soviets—Johansen shows why they have actually speeded up the arms race.

> . . . the Vladivostok agreement was neither 'a firm ceiling on the strategic arms race,' nor 'a cap . . . on the arms race,' as the president and the secretary of state had claimed. It merely registered a recognition that for ten years at least no more than 2,400 strategic launchers should be built, while the arms race shifted to perfecting multiple warheads and guidance systems, and sophisticated underwater launching, cruise missiles, and new bombers. The accord merely emphasized and accelerated a shift toward qualitative improvements of weapons. . . . The agreement allowed the continuation of an unabated arms buildup in areas preferred by military officials, while appearing to regulate arms deployment in directions that were no longer of interest to them.

The bargaining process itself has fueled the arms race. While the SALT negotiations were on, the United States decided to develop MIRV, technology for converting missiles into hydra-headed weapons capable of hitting 10 or more widely dispersed targets. The decision was not made on security grounds; the new system was favored as a "bargaining chip"—something to throw away in return for a Soviet concession. Three years after the first US deployment the Soviets conducted *their* first MIRV test, once again catching up on a major US technological innovation. The result is that land-based missiles in both arsenals are now more vulnerable and this reality is leading to a new arms race. Domestic support for SALT II has been weak because the effects of the treaty are unclear. In a continuing arms race the treaty now before the Senate delivers significant military advantages to the United States, a fact the Joint Chiefs of Staff have recognized. The question Johansen's account raises is whether the seemingly inevitable price of any such agreement—promises to build up to the

Note

Paul Fussell's *Abroad: Literary Traveling Between the Wars*, a portion of which appeared in the August 23 issue of *TNR*, has been published by Oxford University Press.

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allowed ceilings and to expand other parts of the military—creates a political climate in which "world order" values are unrealizable. At this point it seems unlikely that anything positive in controlling the arms race can happen without ratification of SALT II. But if war is to be avoided, the arms limitation process will have to be much clearer and faster. The president will have to explain what a realistic world order could be in the 1980s and why it would serve the national interest.

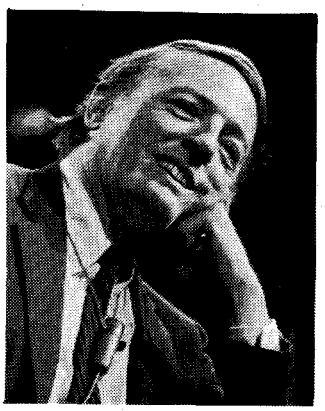
The reason is that increasingly world order values and the national interest are perceived to be antagonistic. As a nation we have been more eager than most to be both a moral force and a preeminent world power. For much of our history we lived by a myth of innocence. We would eschew old world ways—empire grabbing, wars of plunder—to preserve the new world values of democracy and equality. Yet from the beginning, moral isolationism contended with a peculiarly American missionary spirit, an impulse to spread the trappings of democracy, the assembly line, supermarkets, McDonalds, and high technology weapons to deserving customers across the planet.

Having emerged from World War II as the only victor—France, Britain, and Russia were grievously wounded—the United States assumed the "burden of responsibility" for maintaining world peace. The war against Hitler had made it possible for the nation to do good and to do well at one stroke. When the smoke cleared, the United States, having restored its faltering economy through massive investment in military production, was in effective control of the world economy. There was no reason to doubt that the continued fight against evil, now personified by Stalin, would advance the world order values of peace and economic justice as well as the national interest in developing markets, bases, and secure access to resources. Being the world's peacekeeper provided the prestige that keeps other nations in their place—what Dean Acheson once called "the shadow of power."

In the generation and a half following World War II, a time that truly deserves Henry Luce's designation "the American Century," the United States played the role of sheriff for most of the world and was generally lauded for it. To be sure, the Soviets and the Chinese did not join in the cheers, and some of the "new nations" roundly condemned the new "imperialist" power. But the statesmen who counted in world politics, in Europe, Japan, and in key third world countries, welcomed or at least tolerated the rapid expansion of American power. The policies that restored Europe and Japan also made Americans richer. Answering the cries for help around the world from beleaguered governments from Greece to Korea left the nation with a string of bases and a military presence on every continent.

The Vietnam War was a turning point not only because it was the clearest case of an American failure to achieve its policy goals with military might—the inability to destroy the North Korean regime after that goal was publicly proclaimed was the first such failure—but also because significant world political opinion shifted in the midst of the debacle. Statesmen in Europe and Japan made it clear that the United States was not doing the world's business in Indochina. They refused to finance the war by taking unwanted dollars. The Bretton Woods monetary system that had enshrined US economic hegemony collapsed. As the energy crisis became more visible, conflicts appeared between what was in the American national interest and what was in the interest of everybody else.

At flood tide the era of American responsibility was a time of elegant rationalization of self-serving nationalism. As Johansen shows in his treatment of US-Chile relations, CIA "dirty tricks" and the backing of murderous dictators were habitually justified as lesser evil tactics in behalf of world



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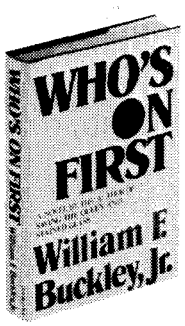

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order. The alternative to heavy-handed intervention was communism. Freely elected or not, communism was a mortal threat to world order values. Extreme measures were necessary because communism was irreversible. Once in power, it could never be voted out. It would never change. Every country so designated became a Soviet pawn. Removing the scourge by whatever methods was a service to the world community. So also was American investment, however predatory. The United States was the engine of the world economy. The richer the nation became, the more riches would trickle down into the underdeveloped world.

Every imperial power manufactures power-preserving myths. But it is perilous to perpetuate the myths when they are no longer credible. In a dangerous world a great nation exposes itself to enormous risks when it loses touch with reality. As Johansen shows, the operational values of the US national security managers—the maximization of national power, national wealth, and national options—defeat the world order values for which they are ostensibly pursued. The futile quest for military superiority will create more insecurity for Americans along with everyone else. In a world of 150 nations, 50 of which have, or by the end of the century will be able to develop, nuclear weapons, old style peace-keeping strategies are absurd. To revive an anticommunist crusade, in a world in which countries so designated are fighting each other and one of the largest is becoming an ally, requires more pretense than most of the world will now accept. A development strategy which has the unintended consequence of widening the gap between rich and poor threatens the affluent. If something approaching half the world is out of work and on the edge of starvation the US economy will feel the effects. Desperate people migrate, as we have increasingly seen, and the most efficient police system cannot keep them out.

The United States has arrived at a moment of choice. The natural harmony between US national interests as defined by the bureaucracies charged with promoting them and the world order values of peace, justice, ecological balance, and social justice no longer obtains, if it ever did. It is beyond the power of the United States to make the world a safe place for the United States as it is. The critical national security question—one addressed by none of the presidential candidates—is how much we have to change our definition of national interest in order to embrace the survival values needed in a world of limited resources and increasing anarchy.

Richard Barnet

Richard Barnet is the author of *The Lean Years: Politics in the Age of Scarcity* (Simon & Schuster).

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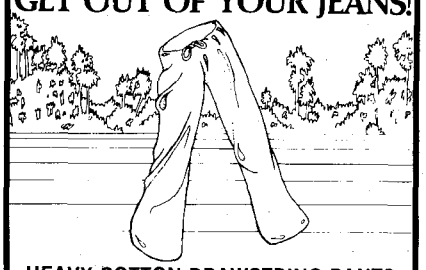

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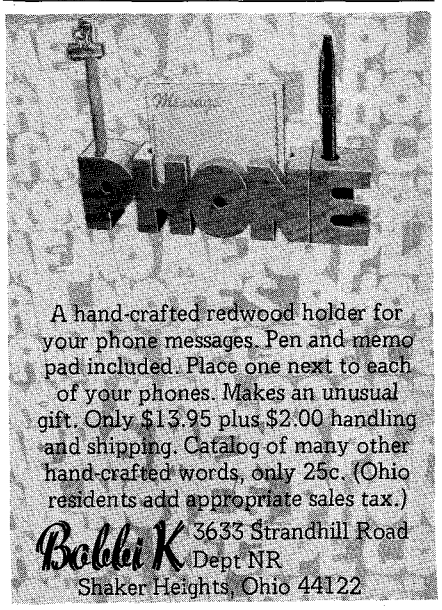

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Washington Diarist

Afterthoughts and Second Thoughts

The mind of an editor, at least this editor's mind, is full of afterthoughts. That's not true of all editors, of course. I don't think it's true, for example, of Mike Kinsley, whose magazine this has been these last four years at least as much as it's been mine. Yesterday's achievement—or yesterday's disaster—is for him yesterday's business; his agenda is tomorrow's business. I, on the other hand, worry a lot and even recriminate a bit about what's past. In fact, I'm brooding this very minute about a few recent issues in ways that keep me from thinking about the issue coming up. No, nothing has happened to make me regret our decision to endorse John Anderson. I've received many reproachful calls from friends in the administration—and outside it, too—meant to provoke "a dramatic last-minute change of heart that would bring the liberal defectors to Anderson back home." Even those in the employ of the present tenant at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue don't have much to say in the president's favor. Talking to them does remind me, however, how momentarily satisfying it has been during these last years to have friends in the corridors of power to whom one can bitch and suggest. With Reagan, there'll likely be no one to call. But better to be without illusions of influence than with them. I do have one regret with reference to Carter, and that is *TNR*'s endorsement of him in 1976. We misled our readers then, but that was in innocence. There'd be no justification and no excuse for doing it again.

Many reporters I know are frustrated novelists, but I'd never thought Daniel Schorr one of them, certainly not on the evidence of his dogged and matter-of-fact writing. But then in *TNR* of October 4 I read "The Trigon Caper," a story he'd brought in on a day I was in New York. It began, "The Brotherhood is a fraternity of the political right and outcasts from the intelligence-defense establishment. . . ." I hadn't known this cabal actually had a name. Obviously I'd heard about these strange American paranoids, who actually think the Soviets spy on us, for years at dinner parties on New York's Upper West Side. But Schorr's suggestion that senators Pat Moynihan, Jesse Helms, Malcolm Wallop, and Gordon Humphrey, plus a few US and British security intellectuals, actually composed something remotely like a network is sheer invention. In some rough sense, I suppose, these men have something in common—about what Robert Taft and the Communist party had in common when they both supported public housing in the 1950s. Schorr rightly faults the *New York Times* for identifying Brzezinski aide David Aaron as the official apparently suspected by some of having compromised an American agent in Moscow. But then Schorr complains that neither Moynihan nor Wallop, whose Senate subcommittee was trying to find out who might have been responsible for the security breach, "nor their staffers would say whom they had in mind." Did Schorr really want them, but not the *Times*, to finger Aaron? Since I believe Aaron is guilty of nothing, I'm glad they didn't and sorry the *Times* did. But if anyone is guilty of anything in this messy affair, I'm also glad that a Senate committee is investigating despite the CIA assurances that there's nothing to investigate. When does Schorr trust the CIA? When it suits him. The Russians think this committee is so important that they have tried to place an agent on its staff.

Some months ago I commissioned former *Ramparts* editor Sol Stern to research an article on *Time* magazine's treatment of Israel and the PLO. We didn't much like the finished piece here and returned it; in due course it ran in the *Village Voice*, the first genuinely friendly article to Israel to appear there in ages. Our non-publication of Stern's effort became a minor media event. It was the lead item on Page Six, the untrustworthy *New York Post*'s most untrustworthy feature. Somehow our rejection of this pro-Israel piece showed we were turning right. No matter: such fine distinctions are beyond Murdoch's people. In any case, we looked for someone else to do the study on *Time*. Rael Jean Isaac's devastating critique appeared in the issue of October 18, causing a stir, not least among longtime *Time* staffers, some of whom have called to thank us for assembling the evidence of the big newsweekly's systematic bias against Israel. Of course it's not just *Time* that suspends its critical faculties when faced with the received banalities on the Middle East. Isaac had put *Time* in the wider context of the American press; but in cutting for space, we eliminated the context. Douglas Feith in the current number of *Middle East Review* does a more limited, but not less brilliant, analysis of how the *Washington Post* is taken in by what its correspondents refuse to learn about the Middle East.

Even in adversity, the Iranians are contemptuous of us. Just how contemptuous Prime Minister Rajai has been will be understood only by those who paid attention to the symbolic language with which he addressed us. At a press conference at the UN, Rajai bared the soles of his feet, ostensibly to show the residual (but hardly visible) scars of having been beaten by Savak. Moslems put the soles of their feet in your face only if they've decided to offend; they're exquisitely careful about such matters. The scars that the prime minister put forward as stigmata of his suffering and heroism constitute the second item of contempt. *Bastinada* or *falaca* is an old Koranic punishment, and it's about as serious as caning in an English public school. More evidence of the shah's cruelties to Iranian freedom fighters? Rajai's transgressions must not have been very serious.

Ramsey Clark, Daniel Berrigan, Dr. Spock, William Sloane Coffin, and the other usual suspects have formed an Emergency Committee for Peace in the Persian Gulf and Release of American Hostages. Why should anyone want to take advice from these people? They've been wrong so often, and most grievously about Hanoi's designs on Southeast Asia, that sensible people should have second thoughts about listening to them about anything. I, for one, don't even understand why worshippers at the Riverside Church would want to hear Coffin on Sundays. He's a spellbinder, of course, but only if you don't really listen to what he's saying. No one has ever claimed that he's much of a theologian. Since he's primarily interested in politics, possibly it's the masochistic strain in the Protestant elite that explains his appointment to the Rockefeller family's private pulpit. Here's a typical sentence: "We must not leave a stone unturned, but we should not grasp at straws." That's the kind of wisdom that inhibits any thought at all.

M.P.

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Washington Diarist

Taxed

There cannot be many places left in the United States where the counsel of the Honorable Andrew Young still is taken seriously, though there must be a few loyalists remaining at the *Humanist* magazine and the American Friends Service Committee. This helps to explain why his considered judgment of the prospects for racial conciliation under President Reagan was generally buried in the newspapers' coverage of the presidential campaign. Mr. Young summarizes Governor Reagan's sympathies with the forceful concision we have all come to expect of the man who characterized the Ayatollah Khomeini as a saint: "It's going to be all right to kill niggers when he's president." Of course the papers all reported this, but even the *Washington Post*, which ordinarily could have gotten a week's worth of page one headlines out of the episode, mentioned it only after the president had disavowed the remark, and then on page three. Apparently it is no longer newsworthy for Andrew Young to say inflammatory or merely absurd things. In 1976 he was a prominent civil rights leader, a respected congressman, and a key to Jimmy Carter's election strategy. In four brief years his name has become synonymous with witless buffoonery. If he keeps it up, he eventually may become as durable a part of American comic lore as Harold Stassen and Marv Throneberry.

In our editorial last week, *TNR* endorsed Connecticut's Representative Christopher Dodd for the US Senate. In case there are any readers in that state still awaiting advice from this journal, I herewith dissent from that endorsement and urge them to pull the lever for James Buckley. Mr. Buckley served the state of New York in the same capacity from 1970 to 1976—or rather served the nation, while representing New York—and did so with grace, good humor, and intelligence. Despite many disagreements, I think Buckley is a model of what a conservative should be. While in the Senate he showed singular bravery in working against the federal bailout of New York City, a position that proved instrumental to his defeat by Daniel Patrick Moynihan. He voted for intelligent conservation and environmental laws, and most recently lobbied on behalf of the Alaska lands bill favored by the environmentalist Alaska Coalition. He harbors a principled belief in the market; hence, unlike most Republicans, he voted against the federal loan guarantee to Lockheed. He was the first conservative Republican in the Senate to publicly request President Nixon's resignation. He joined a lawsuit against the 1974 election reforms, which led to a historic Supreme Court decision overturning many of the law's restrictions on campaign spending and contributions. Buckley is both brighter and less doctrinaire than his more famous brother. He is needed in the Senate to compel more careful thought by liberals and to encourage civility and imagination among conservatives.

If anyone wants to know why fundamentalist churches are on the rise and mainstream ones are on the decline, consider an event called "Responsible Energy Sabbath," sponsored last weekend by a collection of respectably liberal church groups, most notably the National Council of Churches but also including Jewish and Catholic organizations. "The use and misuse of energy is, at root, a religious issue, and we all have a moral responsibility to solve the energy problem," declared the sponsors in a brochure publicizing the observance. It will surprise no one to learn that their energy agenda consists entirely of promoting conservation and solar energy and providing money to help the poor pay their fuel bills. The latter I have nothing against, though I'm not sure that concentrating exclusively on fuel bills is necessarily the best way to obey the biblical injunction to help the poor. Conservation and solar energy, on the other hand, are desirable only insofar as they cost less than the alternatives—a point which the sponsors, who seem utterly innocent of any acquaintance with economics, blithely overlook. As for what either conservation or "renewable resources" have to do with Christianity, I can only suppose that the organizers of this event can construct, under duress, some tortured argument about man's stewardship of God's gifts. The Responsible Energy Sabbath reflects the thinking of many clerics and laymen that the church's sacred role in the world is to supplement the efforts of the ADA and the Sierra Club. Small wonder that so many people are abandoning denominations like my own, the United Presbyterians, and filling up the pews in the evangelical churches. The fundamentalists offer the faithful redemption and salvation, the Word made flesh, a cross at Golgotha. The mainstream churches offer home insulation and a political agenda indistinguishable from Barry Commoner's. The evangelicals take their religion seriously, while the mainstream churches seem almost embarrassed by any theological baggage which does not provide ammunition for the latest fashionable political cause. Millions of Americans are spiritually impoverished, and only the evangelicals seem interested in feeding them.

The news last week that in the last 10 years the University of Southern California has admitted more than 300 students, almost all of them athletes, who didn't meet the school's minimum academic standards was treated as a shocking scandal, but I can't imagine that it surprised anyone with the barest acquaintance with intercollegiate athletics. College athletics are a scandal, of course, but they are a scandal we have come to accept. It does tax one's tolerance for this comfortable hypocrisy, though, when the former USC president defends the admission of unqualified students not on the basis that the alumni want winning teams and won't contribute to the university without them, but by describing the charade as a humanitarian program. Said Dr. John Hubbard in an interview in the *New York Times*, "I saw it in the context of freshman access. I am proud of the minority access program." Apparently Dr. Hubbard is not troubled by the minority access program's somewhat curious emphasis on minority youngsters who can slam dunk with both hands or cover 40 yards in 4.6 seconds or less. In response to a report which suggested his minority access program was less than successful from an academic point of view—"Only a small number of athletes admitted as exceptions have ever graduated from the University," it said—Dr. Hubbard consoled himself thus: "Obviously our ideal is that everybody who enrolls here gets a degree. Not just athletes, everybody. But that isn't the way it works." I don't know what Dr. Hubbard has been doing since his departure from USC, but already there must be dozens of alumni associations that would like him to carry on his affirmative action programs at their own universities, and perhaps incidentally improve their football programs as well.

S.C.

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